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100 YEARS B.C.?

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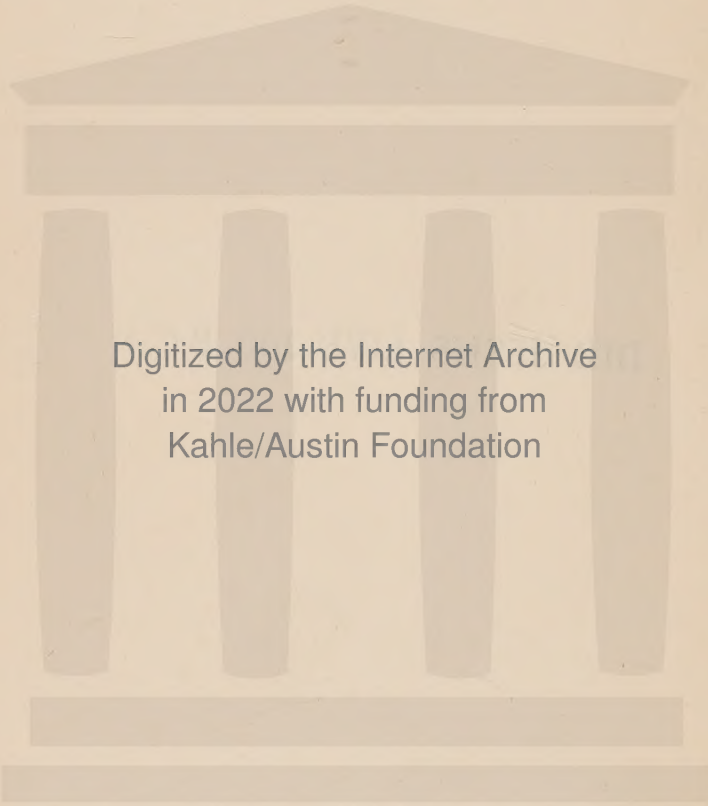
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DID JESUS LIVE 100 B.C.?



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DID JESUS LIVE 100 B.C.?

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE TALMUD JESUS
STORIES, THE TOLDOTH JESCHU, AND SOME
CURIOUS STATEMENTS OF EPIPHANIUS—
BEING A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF
CHRISTIAN ORIGINS. BY G. R. S. MEAD,
B.A., M.R.A.S.

"Where are divers opinions, they may be all false; there can be but one true: and that one truth oftentimes must be fetched by piece-meal out of divers branches of contrary opinions. For, it falls out not seldom, that truth is, through ignorance or rash vehemence, scattered into sundry parts; and like to a little silver melted among ruins of a burnt house, must be tried out from heaps of much superfluous ashes. There is much pains in the search of it, much skill in finding it; the value of it, once found, requites the cost of both."—BISHOP HALL.

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DID JESUS LIVE 100 B.C.?

I.—FOREWORD.

WHEN some five and a half centuries before the Christian era the Buddha arose in ancient Āryāvarta to substitute actuality for tradition, to break down the barriers of convention, and throw open the Way of Righteousness to all, irrespective of race or birth, we are told that He set aside the ancestral scriptures of His race and times, and preached a Gospel of self-reliance and a freedom from bibliolatry that will ever keep His memory green among the independent thinkers of the world.

Christ and
Criticism.

When the Christ arose in Judæa, once more to break down the barriers of exclusiveness, and preach the Way to the 'Amme ha-aretz, the rejected of the ceremonialists and legal purists, we are told that He extended the ægis of His great authority over the ancient writings of His fellow-countrymen, and cited the Torah as the very Law of God Himself.

We are assured by Traditionalists that the Incarnation of Deity Itself, the very Giver of that Law, explicitly attested the genuineness of the Five Books; He, with His inerrant wisdom, asserted that Moses wrote them, just as it was believed by the people of His day.

Whereas, if there be anything certain in the whole field of Biblical research, it is that this cannot be the whole truth of the matter.

It has been said in excuse that the Christ did not come on earth to teach His disciples the "higher criticism." This may well be so, and yet it is a fact of profound significance that, as we shall see in the course of the present enquiry, even in His day this very Torah, and much more the Prophets and Sacred Writings, were called into serious question by many.

Brāhman and
Jew.

If, however, the Christ actually used the words ascribed to Him in this matter, it is difficult to understand why a plan so different in this respect was adopted in the West from the apparently far more drastic attempt that was made so many years before in the East. It may, however, have been found that the effect of a so abrupt departure from tradition had not proved so successful as had been anticipated, for the Brāhman, instead of giving of his best, and allowing himself to become the channel of a great spiritual outpouring for the benefit of the world, quickly resumed his ancient position of exclusiveness and spiritual isolation.

So in the case of the Jew, who was, as it were, a like channel ready to hand for the West, whereby the new spiritual forces could most efficaciously be liberated, it may have been thought that if the traditional prejudices of that "chosen" and "peculiar" people were more gently treated perhaps greater results would follow. But even so the separative forces in human nature were too strong, and the Jew, like the Brāhman, fell back into a more rigid exclusiveness than ever. But the Wisdom behind Her Servants doubtless knew that this

would be, and reserved both Brāhman and Jew for some future opportunity of greater promise, while She temporarily utilized them, in spite of themselves, and in spite of the mistakes of their Buddhist and Christian brethren; for all of us, Brāhmans and Buddhists, Hebrews and Christians, are of like passions, and struggling in the bonds of our self-limitations and ignorance; we are all children of one Mother, our common human nature, and of one Father, the divine source of our being.

It may have been that in the first place the great Teacher of the West made His appeal to the "Brāhmans" of Jewry, and only when He found that no impression could be made upon their rigid adherence to rules and customs, did he go to the people. There are many Sayings strongly opposed to Legalism, as understood by subsequent Rabbinical orthodoxy, and, as we shall see, there were many mystic circles in the early days, even on what was considered "the ground of Judaism," which not only rejected the authority of the Prophets and Sacred Writings, but even called into question the Torah proper in much of its contents. Moreover, we find that Jesus was, among other things, called by the adherents of orthodox Rabbinism a "Samaritan," a name which connoted "heresy" in general for the strict Jew, but which, as we shall see, seems to the student of history sometimes to stand merely for one who held less exclusive views.

However all this may be, and whatever was attempted or hoped for at the beginning, the outcome was that until about the end of the first century the Christians regarded the documents of the Palestinian canon as their only Holy Scripture, and when they began to add

The Christian
and the Torah.

to this their own sacred writings, they still clung to the "Books" of Jewry, and regarded them with the same enthusiastic reverence as the Rabbis themselves. The good of it was that a strong link of East with West was thus forged; the evil, that the authority of this library of heterogeneous legends and myths, histories and ordinances, the literature of a peculiar people, and the record of their special evolution, was taken indiscriminately as being of equal weight with the more liberal and, so to speak, universalizing views of the new movement. Moreover, every moment of the evolution of the idea of God in Jewry was taken as a full revelation, and the crude and revengeful Yahweh of a semi-barbarous stage equated with the evolved Yahweh of the mystic and humanitarian.

For good or ill Christianity has to this day been bound up with this record of ancient Judaism. The Ancestors of the Jew have become for the Christian the glorified Patriarchs of humanity, who beyond all other men walked with God. The Biblical history of the Jew is regarded as the making straight in the desert of human immorality and paganism of a highway for the Lord of the Christians. Jesus, who is worshipped by the Christians as God, so much so that the cult of the Father has from the second century been relegated to an entirely subordinate position—Jeschu ha-Notzri was a Jew.

The Jew and
the Gospel.

On the other hand we have to-day before us in the Jews the strange and profoundly interesting phenomenon of a nation without a country, scattered throughout the world, planted in the midst of every Christian nation, and yet strenuously rejecting the faith which

Christendom holds to be the saving grace of humanity. Even as the Brāhmanists were the means of sending forth Buddhism into the world, and then, by building up round themselves a stronger wall of separation than ever, cut themselves off from the new endeavour, so were the Jews the means of launching Christianity into the world, and then, by hedging themselves round with an impermeable legal fence, shut themselves entirely from the new movement. In both cases the ancient blood-tie and the idea of a religion for a nation triumphed over time and every other modifying force.

What, then, can be of profounder interest than to learn what the Jews have said concerning Jesus and Christianity? And yet how few Christians to-day know anything of this subject; how few have the remotest conception of the traditions of Jewry concerning the founder of their faith! For so many centuries have they regarded Jesus as God, and everything concerning Him, as set apart in the history of the world, as unique and miraculous, that to find Him treated of as a simple man, and that too as one who misled the children of His people, appears to the believer as the rankest blasphemy. Least of all can such a mind realize even faintly that the claims of the Church on behalf of Jesus have ever been thought, and are still thought, by the followers of the Torah to be equally the extreme of blasphemy, most solemnly condemned by the first and foremost of the commandments which the pious Jew must perforce believe came straight from God Himself.

Astonishing, therefore, as it appears, though Jew and Christian use the same Scripture in common, with regard to their fundamental beliefs they stand over

against each other in widest opposition; and the man who sincerely loves his fellows, who feels his kinship with man as man, irrespective of creed, caste, or race, stands aghast at the contradictions revealed by the warring elements in our common human nature, and is dismayed at the infinite opposition of the powers he sees displayed in his brethren and feels potential in himself.

The New
Humanism.

But, thank God, to-day we are in the early years of the twentieth century, when a deeper sense of human kinship is dawning on the world, when the general idea of God is so evolved that we dare no longer clothe Him in the tawdry rags of human passions, or create Him in the image of our ignorance, as has been mostly the case for so many sorrowful centuries. We are at last beginning to learn that God is at least as highly developed as a wise and just mortal; we refuse to ascribe to Deity a fanaticism and jealousy, an inhumanity and mercilessness, of which we should be heartily ashamed in ourselves. There are many to-day who would think themselves traitors to their humanity, much more to the divinity latent within them, were they to make distinctions between Jew or Christian, Brāhman or Buddhist, or between all or any of these and the Confucian, or Mohammedan, or Zoroastrian. They are all our brethren, children of a common parent, these say. Let the dead past bury its dead, and let us follow the true humanity hidden in the hearts of all.

But how to do this so long as records exist? How to do this while we each glory in the heredity of our bodies, and imagine that it is the spiritual ancestry of

our souls? What is it that makes a man cling to the story of his "fathers," fight for it, and identify himself with all its natural imperfections and limitations? Are not these rather, at any rate on the ground of religion, in some fashion the "parents" we are to think little of, to "hate," as one of the "dark sayings" ascribed to the Christ has it?

Why should a Jew of to-day, why should a Christian of the early years of the twentieth century, identify himself with the hates of years gone by? What have we to do with the bitter controversies of Church Fathers and Talmudic Rabbis; what have we to do with the fierce inhumanity of mediæval inquisitors, or the retorts of the hate of persecuted Jewry? Why can we not at last forgive and forget in the light of the new humanism which education and mutual intercourse is shedding on the world?

Wise indeed are the words: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And yet in theology all the trouble is about this God whom we have not seen. Theology, which ought to be a help and a comfort, becomes the greatest scourge of humanity, for in theology we do not say this or that is true because the present facts of nature and human consciousness testify to its truth, but this is true because many years ago God declared it was so—a thing we can never know on the plane of our present humanity, and a declaration which, as history proves, has led to the bitterest strife and discord in the past, and which is still to-day a serious obstacle to all progress in religion.

Theology the
Divider.

When, then, we take pen in hand to review part of

the history of this great strife between Christian and Jew in days gone by, we do so because we have greater faith in present-day humanity than in the inhumanity of the past. Let us agree to seek an explanation, to confer together, to sink our pride in our own opinion, and discover why we are enemies, one of another, in things theological, while we are friends perchance in things scientific and philosophic.

An Appeal to
Humanists.

But this book is not intended for the man whose "Christianity" is greater than his humanity, nor for him whose "Judaism" is stronger than his love of human kind; it is not meant for the theologian who loves his preconceptions more than truth, or for the fanatic who thinks he is the only chosen of God. It is a book for men and women who have experience of life and human nature, who have the courage to face things as they are; who know that on the one hand the Churches of to-day, no matter how they strive carefully to disguise the fact, are confronted by the gravest possible difficulties as to doctrine, while many of the clergy, owing to a total lack of wise guidance by those in authority, are becoming a law unto themselves, or, because of the terrorism of ecclesiastical laymen, are forced to be hypocrites in the pulpit; and, on the other hand, that Judaism cannot continue in its traditional mould without doing the utmost violence to its intelligence.

Traditional theology, traditional history, traditional views in general are being questioned on all hands, and there is an ever-growing conviction that the consciousness and conscience of a Church, whether that Church be the Congregation of Christendom or the Dispersion of

Israel, evolve from century to century; that religion is not an exception to the law which is seen to be operative in every department of nature and human activity; and that, therefore, it is incumbent upon all who have the best interests of religion at heart "to maintain the right and duty of [any] Church to restate her belief from time to time, as required by the progressive revelation of the Holy Spirit," as one of the objects of the Churchmen's Union declares.

To-day, in thinking and progressive Christendom, we have before us the spectacle of the mind and heart of the earnest seeker after truth torn and lacerated by the contradictions and manifest absurdities of much in the tradition of the Faith. The only relief from this most painful state of affairs is to be found in the courageous recognition, that in the early days the marvellous mysteries of the inner life and the inner nature of man were objectivized and historicized by those who either did not understand their true spiritual import, or who deliberately used this method for the instruction of the many who were unable to grasp in their proper terms the spiritual verities of man in his perfecting. To this we will return at the end of our present enquiry and endeavour to show how even Jew and Christian can learn to understand and respect each other even on the ground of religion.

And, indeed, the time is very opportune, for some of the preliminary conditions for a better understanding are being prepared. To-day there is being given to the world for the first time what purports to be "a faithful record of the multifarious activity" of the Jewish people. The Israelite has been a mystery to the

The New
Jewish Ency-
clopædia.

Christian, a mystery to humanity, from generation to generation; he has lived in our midst, and we have not known him, nay, we have been content to believe anything of him, while he for the most part has been inarticulate as to himself, his hopes, and his fears. The Jewish Encyclopædia¹ is to remedy this evil, for it sets before itself the endeavour "to give, in systematized, comprehensive, and yet succinct form, a full and accurate account of the history and literature, the social and intellectual life of the Jewish people, of their ethical and religious views, their customs, rites, and traditions in all ages and in all lands."

Such a work is an undertaking of the most profound interest and importance, and we look forward to its publication with the liveliest anticipation, asking ourselves the questions: What will the Jew in this comprehensive Encyclopædia have to tell us of Christianity? How will he treat the traditions of his fathers concerning Jesus? To-day we can no longer burn or torture him or confiscate his goods.² His account of himself, moreover, is to be given by the best intelligence in him. What, then, will he say concerning Jesus and the long centuries of bitter strife between the Christians and his own people?

From the three volumes which have so far appeared it is not possible to answer this question; but that it is *the* question of all questions in Jewish affairs that demands a wise answer, will be seen from our present

¹ Three of its twelve volumes only have so far appeared. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls; 1901, in progress.)

² Though the East of Europe is not yet quite powerless in this respect.

enquiry. To ignore it, or merely to confine it to vague generalities, is of no advantage to the world.

As the New Testament was added to the Old The Talmud.
Covenant Bible by the Church Fathers, and formed the basis of their exegesis, so was the Talmud added to the Torah by the Rabbis, and formed the special study of later Jewry. The Talmud covers the whole period of the early Christian centuries. What has the Talmud to say of Christianity? For as the editors of the *Encyclopædia* well say:

“The Talmud is a world of its own, awaiting the attention of the modern reader. In its encyclopædic compass it comprises all the variety of thought and opinions, of doctrine and science, accumulated by the Jewish people in the course of more than seven centuries, and formulated for the most part by their teachers. Full of the loftiest spiritual truths and of fantastic imagery, of close and learned legal disquisitions and of extravagant exegesis, of earnest doctrine and of minute casuistry, of accurate knowledge and of popular conceptions, it invites the world of to-day to a closer acquaintance with its voluminous contents.”

To-day it is becoming a canon of historical research History and
Dogma.
that the study of ancient history can hardly ever reward us by the attainment of incontrovertible fact; it can at best only tell us what the opinions of certain writers were about the facts of which we are in search. Many years of study of Christian origins have convinced some of us that it is impossible to be absolutely certain historically of any objective fact relating to the life of Jesus as handed on by tradition. We can only say that this or that seems more likely to have occurred;

and here again our preference, if we trace it deep enough, will be found to depend entirely on subjective considerations. Canonical Christianity gradually evolved the mind-bewildering dogma that Jesus was in deed and truth very God of very God, unique and miraculous in every possible respect; and the Church for some seventeen or eighteen centuries has boldly thrown down this challenge to the intellect and experience of humanity. Strong in the strength of her faith in miracle she has triumphed in her theology, and imposed it on the West even until the present day; but at last she has herself developed an intellect which can no longer fully believe in this. A new spirit is at work in her children, who are busily trying to convince their mother that she has been mistaken in many things, and has often misunderstood the wisdom of the Master.

The Womb of
Christianity.

It is because of this stupendous claim on behalf of Jesus, a claim which has perhaps astonished none more than Himself, that the Church has brought upon herself a scrutiny into the history of her origins that it is totally unable to bear. Every single assertion about her great Teacher is scrutinized with a minuteness that is not demanded in the case of any other historical problem, and the lay student who follows the 'researches' of specialists meets with so many contradictions in the analysis of the traditional data, and is brought face to face with so many warring opinions, that he is in despair of arriving at any patent historic certainty on any single point in the Evangelical record. Nevertheless he is confronted by the unavoidable fact that a great religion came to birth; and, if he be not an out and out five-sense rationalist, his

only relief lies in the belief that the secret of this birth must have been hidden in a psychic womb, and the real history of the movement must therefore be sought in some great drama that was enacted in the unseen world.

But the interest in the problem is by no means lessened because of the historical uncertainty; on the contrary it is a thousand-fold increased. The subject can never be made solely a matter of dry historical research; it will always be involved in the most profoundly instructive psychological phenomena, and that too not only in the study of the minds of the ancient writers, but also in the appreciation of the preconceptions of their modern critics. Hence it is that any book dealing with the question of Christian origins is before all others a human document from which, no matter what view a man may take, there is always something to be learned of our complex human nature.

The Interest
of our En-
quiry.

And with regard to our present enquiry, what can be of greater interest than to observe how that from the same facts, whatever those facts may have been, on the one hand, under the expansive influence of love, wonder, credulity, and intense religious enthusiasm, there was evolved the story of God Himself uniquely incarnate in man; while on the other, from feelings of annoyance, of surprise, and disbelief, and, later, of hate, bred of an equal enthusiasm for religion, there was built up the story of a deceiver of Israel? Here we see evolved, generation by generation, and side by side, absolutely contradictory representations purporting to be the accounts of the doings and sayings of one and the same person.

The philosophic mind can thus derive much food for reflexion by a comparison of the Christian and Jewish traditions concerning Jesus, and his studies will lead him to understand how that a thing which may be perfectly true psychically or spiritually, and of great help to the religious life, can, when taken out of its proper sphere, and aggressively asserted as a purely physical and historical fact, be turned into a subject of grossest material controversy. Thus it may be that we shall be able to estimate, at their just values, some things which cannot but appear extremely shocking to conventional religious minds, and be able to understand how what was regarded by the one side as a saving truth, could be regarded by the other as a mischievous error; how what was declared by the Christians to be the highest honour, could be regarded by the Jew as a proof of dishonour; how what was believed in by the former as the historic facts of a unique divine revelation, could be treated disparagingly, or with mockery and even humour, by those who held to the tradition of what they believed to have been equally a unique revelation of the Divine.

The Main
Object of
Search.

But it is not the doctrinal quarrels which chiefly interest us in studying these traditions of Jewry. What, in our opinion, is of far greater interest is that the Jewish traditions, in spite of some gross contradictions, in the main assign a date to Jesus which widely differs from that of Christian tradition. The main object of this enquiry is to state this problem, to show that in moderate probability for many centuries this was *the* Jewish tradition as to the date of Jesus, not to attack or defend it. Moreover, we have taken up this subject

not only on general grounds of interest, but also for a special reason.

For this problem, though not as yet even heard of by the general public, is, nevertheless, of great interest to many students of Theosophy, and, therefore, it seems to press, not for solution—for of that there are no immediate hopes—but for a more satisfactory definition than has been as yet accorded to it.

The problem, then, we are about to attempt more clearly to define is not a metaphysical riddle, not a spiritual enigma, not some moral puzzle (though all of these factors may be made to inhere in it), but a problem of physical fact, well within the middle distance of what is called the historic period. It is none the less on this account of immense importance and interest generally, and especially to thoughtful students of “origins,” for it raises no less a question than that of an error in the date of the life of the Founder of Christianity; and that, too, not by the comparatively narrow margin of some seven or eight years (as many have already argued on the sole basis of generally accepted traditional *data*), but by no less a difference than the (in such a connection) enormous time-gulf of a full century. Briefly, the problem may be popularly summed up in the startling and apparently ludicrous question: Did Jesus live 100 B.C.?

The Problem.

Now, had all such questioning been confined to a small circle of first-hand investigators of the hidden side of things, or, if we may say so, of the noumena of things historic underlying the blurred records of phenomena handed down to us by tradition, there would be no immediate necessity for the present enquiry;

The Need of
its Definition.

but of late years very positive statements on this matter, based on such methods of research, have been printed and circulated among those interested in such questions; and what, in the opinion of the writer, makes the matter even more pressing, is that these statements are being readily accepted by ever-growing numbers. Now, it goes without saying, that the majority of those who have accepted such statements have done so either for subjective reasons satisfactory to themselves, or from some inner feeling or impression which they have not been at pains to analyse. The state of affairs, then, seems clearly to demand, that as they have heard a little of the matter, they should now hear more, and that the question should be taken out of the primitive crudeness of a choice between two sets of mutually contradictory assertions, and advanced a stage into the subtler regions of critical research.

The Resultant
Dilemma.

As far as the vast majority of the general public who may chance to stumble on the amazing question which heads our enquiry, is concerned, it is only to be expected that they will answer it offhand not only with an angry No, but with the further reflection that the very formulating of such a query betokens the vagaries of a seriously disordered mind; indeed, at the outset of our investigations we were also ourselves decidedly of the opinion that no mind trained in historic research, even the most cautious, would hesitate for a moment to sum up the probabilities of the accessible evidence as pointing to a distinct negative. But when all is said and done, we find ourselves in a position of doubt between, on the one hand, the seeming impossibility of impugning the genuineness of the Pilate date, and on the other, an

uncomfortable feeling that the nature of the inconsistencies of the Hebrew tradition rather strengthens than diminishes the possibility that there may be something after all in what appears to be its most insistent factor—namely, that Jesus lived in the days of Jannai.

It is not, then, with any hopes of definitely solving the problem that these pages are written, but rather with the object of pointing out the difficulties which have to be surmounted by an unprejudiced historian, before on the one hand he can rule such a question entirely out of court, or on the other can permit himself to give even a qualified recognition to such a revolutionary proposition in the domain of Christian origins; and further, of trying to indicate by an object lesson what appears to me to be the sane attitude of mind with regard to similar problems, which those of us who have had some experience of the possibilities of so-called occult research, but who have not the ability to study such matters at first-hand, should endeavour to hold.

In what is set forth in this essay, then, I hope most honestly to endeavour to treat the matter without prejudice, save for this general prepossession, that I consider it saner for the only normally endowed individual to hold the mind in suspense over all categorical statements which savour in any way of the nature of "revelation," by whomsoever made, than to believe either on the one hand without investigation, or on the other in despair of arriving at any real bed-rock of facts in the unsubstantial material commonly believed in as history, and thus in either case to crystallise one's mind anew into some "historic" form, on lines of

evidence concerning the nature of which we are as yet almost entirely ignorant.

“Occult”
Research.

And, first of all, let me further set forth very briefly some of the considerations which render it impossible for me to assume either a decidedly negative, or even a purely agnostic, attitude with regard to possibilities of research other than those open to normal ability and industry; for if a man would honestly endeavour, in any fashion really satisfactory to himself, to interpret the observed phenomena of life, he is compelled by a necessity greater than himself to take into consideration *all* the facts of at least his personal experience, no matter how sceptical he may be as to the validity of the experiences of others, or how critical he may be concerning his own. On the other hand, I most freely admit that those who have not had experiences similar to my own, are quite justified in assuming an agnostic attitude with regard to my declarations, but I doubt that it can be considered the nature of a truly scientific mind to deny *a priori* the possibility of my experience, or merely contemptuously to dismiss the matter without any attempt at investigation.

It has been my good fortune—for so I regard it—to know a number of people who have their subtler senses, to a greater or less degree, more fully developed than is normally the case, and also to be intimate with a few whose power of response to extra-normal ranges of impression, vibration, or stimulation (or whatever may be the more correct term) may be said to be, as far as my experience goes, highly developed. These latter are my personal friends, whom I have known for many years, and with whom I have been most closely associated.

From long knowledge of their characters, often under very trying circumstances, I have no reason to believe they are trying to deceive me, and every reason to believe in their good faith. They certainly would have nothing to gain by practising, if it were possible, any concerted imposition upon me, and everything to lose. For, on the one hand, my devotion to the studies I pursue, and the work upon which I am engaged, is entirely independent of individuals and their pronouncements, and, on the other, my feeling of responsibility to humanity in general is such, that I should not have the slightest hesitation in openly proclaiming a fraud, were I to discover any attempt at it, especially in matters which I hold to be more than ordinarily sacred for all who profess to be lovers of truth and labourers for our common welfare. Nor again is there any question here of their trying to influence some prospective "follower," either of themselves, or of some particular sect, for we are more or less contemporaries in similar studies, and one of our common ideals is the desirability of breaking down the boundary walls of sectarianism.

Now, this handful of friends of mine who are endowed in this special fashion are unanimous in declaring that "Jeschu," the historical Jesus, lived a century before the traditional date. They, one and all, claim that, if they turn their attention to the matter, they can see the events of those far-off days passing before their mind's eye, or, rather, that for the time being they seem to be in the midst of them, even as we ordinarily observe events in actual life. They state that not only do their individual researches as to this date work out

to one and the same result, but that also when several of them have worked together, checking one another, the result has been still the same.

Its Possible
Validity.

Familiar as I am with the hypotheses of "collective hallucination," "honest self-deception," and "subjectivism" of all kinds, I have been unable to satisfy myself that any one of these, or any combination of them, will satisfactorily explain the matter. For instance, even granting that certain of the Jewish Jesus stories may have been previously known to some of my colleagues, and that it might be reasonably supposed that this curious tradition had so fascinated their imagination as to become the determining factor in what might be called their subjective dramatising faculty—there are two considerations which, in my opinion, based on my own knowledge and experience, considerably weaken the strength of this sceptical and otherwise apparently reasonable supposition.

First, the general consideration that my friends differ widely from each other in temperament; they are mostly of different nationalities, and all vary considerably in their objective knowledge of Christian origins, and in their special views of external Christianity. Moreover—though they all sincerely endeavour to be impartial on so important a matter, seeing that it touches the life of a Master for whom they have in a very real sense the deepest reverence—while some of them do not happen to be special followers of this particular Teacher, others, on the contrary, are specially attracted by this Way, and might, therefore, be naturally expected to counteract in the interest of received tradition any tendency to apparent extrava-

gance, which was not justified by repeated subjective experiences of such a nature as to outweigh their objective training and natural preconceptions.

Second, the very special consideration, that I have had the opportunity on many occasions of testing the accuracy of some of my colleagues with regard to statements either of a similar nature or of a more personal character. And lest my evidence on this point should be too hastily put out of court by some impatient reader, let me briefly refer to the nature of such verification.

But before doing so, it would be as well to have it understood that the method of investigation to which I am referring does not bring into consideration any question of trance, either self-induced, or mesmerically or hypnotically effected. As far as I can judge, my colleagues are to all outward seeming in quite their normal state. They go through no outward ceremonies, or internal ones for that matter, nor even any outward preparation but that of assuming a comfortable position; moreover, they not only describe, as each normally has the power of description, what is passing before their inner vision in precisely the same fashion as one would describe some objective scene, but they are frequently as surprised as their auditors that the scenes or events they are attempting to explain are not at all as they expected to see them, and remark on them as critically, and frequently as sceptically, as those who cannot "see" for themselves, but whose knowledge of the subject from objective study may be greater than theirs.

Now, although it is true that in the majority of

Some Verified
Results.

cases I have not been able to check their statements, and doubt whether it will ever be possible to do so owing to the lack of objective material, nevertheless, in a number of instances, few when compared with the mass of statements made, but numerous enough in themselves, I have been able to do so. It can, of course, be argued, as has been done in somewhat similar cases, that all of this is merely the bringing into subjective objectivity the imaginative dramatisation of facts which have been normally heard or read, or even momentarily glanced at, and which have sunk beneath the threshold of consciousness, either of that of the seers themselves or of one or other of their auditors, or even some permutation or combination of these. But such an explanation seems somewhat feeble to one who, like myself, has taken down laboriously dictated passages from MSS., described, for instance, as written in archaic Greek uncials—MSS., the contents of which, as far as I am aware, are not known to exist—passages laboriously dictated letter by letter, by a friend whose knowledge of the language extended hardly beyond the alphabet. Occasionally gaps had to be left for certain forms of letters, with which not only my colleague, but also myself, were previously entirely unacquainted ; these gaps had to be filled up afterwards, when the matter was transcribed and broken up into words and sentences, which turned out to be in good construable Greek, the original or copy of which, I am as sure as I can be of anything, neither my colleague nor myself had ever seen physically. Moreover, I have had dates and information given by these methods which I could only verify

afterwards by long and patient research, and which, I am convinced, no one but a widely read scholar of classical antiquity could have come across.

This briefly is the nature of some of the facts of my personal experience in this connection, and while others who have not had such experience may permissibly put it aside, I am unable to do so; and not only am I unable to do so personally, but I further consider it more honest to my readers to admit them to my privacy in this respect, in order that they may be in a better position to estimate the strength or weakness of my preconceptions or prejudices in the treatment of the exceedingly interesting problem which we are about to consider.

It will thus be seen at the outset that I am unable *a priori* to refuse any validity to these so-called occult methods of research; the ghost of my repeated experience rises up before me and refuses to be laid by an impatient "pshaw." But it by no means follows that, because in some instances I have been enabled to verify the truth of my colleagues' statements, I am therefore justified in accepting the remainder on trust. Of their good faith I have no question, but of the nature of the *modus* of their "seeing" I am in almost complete ignorance. That it is of a more subtle nature than ordinary sight, or memory, or even imagination, I am very well assured; but that there should be entrusted to an apparently favoured few, and that, too, comparatively suddenly, a means of inerrant knowledge which seemingly reduces the results of the unwearied toil of the most laborious scholars and historians to the most beggarly proportions, I am not prepared at present to

The Sane
Attitude of
the Layman.

accept. It would rather seem more scientific to suppose that in exact proportion to the startling degree of accuracy that may at times be attained by these subtle methods of research, the errors that may arise can be equally appalling.

And, indeed, this is borne out not only by the perusal of the little studied, but enormous, literature on such subjects, both of antiquity and of the present day, but also by the repeated declarations of those of my colleagues themselves who have endeavoured to fit themselves for a truly scientific use of such faculties. They all declare that their great aim is to eliminate as far as possible the personal factor; for if, so to say, the glass of their mind-stuff, through which they have to see, is not most accurately polished and adjusted, the things seen are all blurred, or distorted into the most fantastic shapes. This "glass" is in itself of a most subtle nature, most plastic and protean; it changes with every desire, with every hope and fear, with every prejudice and prepossession, with every love and hate.

Such factors, then, are not unthought of by my colleagues; rather are they most carefully considered. But this being so, it is plain that it is very difficult to discover a sure criterion of accuracy in such subtle research, even for the practised seer, or seeress, who is willing to submit himself to the strictest discipline; while for those of us who have not developed these distinct inner senses, but who desire eventually to arrive at some certain criterion of truth, and who further believe that this is a thing beyond all sensation, we must be content to develop our critical faculties on

the material accessible to us, and do all we can with it before we abandon the subject to "revelation."

Nor is this latter attitude of mind opposed to the best interests of religion; for, if we are in any way right in our belief, we hold that the workman is only expected to work with his own tools. To use in an expanded sense a phrase of the "Gîtâ," there should be no "confusion of castes"; or to employ the language of one of the Gospel parables, a man should lay out the "talent" entrusted to him to the best advantage, and if he do this, no more for the moment, we may believe, is expected of him. We have all, each in our own way, to labour for the common good; but a workman whose trade is that of objective historical research is rarely trusted with the tools of seership as well, while the seer presumably is not expected to devote his life to historical criticism. Doubtless there may be some who are entrusted with two or more talents of different natures, but so far we have not as yet in our own times come across the desirable blend of a competent seer and a historical critic.

We must, then, each of us in his own way, work together for righteousness; hoping that if in the present we employ our single talents rightly, and prove ourselves profitable servants, we may in the future become masters of two or even more "cities," and thus (to adapt the wording of a famous agraphon) having proved ourselves trustworthy in the "lesser," be accorded the opportunity of showing ourselves faithful in the "greater (mysteries)."

Having, then, prefaced our enquiry by these brief remarks on the nature of the methods of research em-

The Scope of
Our Enquiry.

ployed by those whose statements have lately brought this question into prominence in certain circles, we proceed to enumerate the various deposits of objective material which have to be surveyed and analysed, before a mind accustomed to historical study and the weighing of evidence can feel in a position to estimate even approximately the comparative values of the various traditions.

We have, then, in the first place to consider the Christian tradition that Jesus was born in the reign of Herod, and was put to death under Pontius Pilate, and further, to glance at the material from Pagan sources claimed to substantiate this tradition; in the second to acquaint ourselves with the Talmud Jeschu stories which purport to preserve traditions of the life and date of Jeschu totally at variance on almost every point with the Christian account; further to investigate the Toldoth Jeschu or mediæval Jewish Jesus legends; and lastly to consider some very curious passages in the writings of the Church Father Epiphanius of Salamis.

That there are many better equipped and more competent than myself to discuss these difficult subjects, no one is more keenly aware than I am. But seeing that there are no books on the subject readily accessible to the general reader, I may be excused for coming forward, not with the pretension of discovering any facts previously unknown to specialists, but with the very modest ambition of attempting some new combinations of some of the best-known of such facts, while generally indicating some of the outlines of the question for those who cannot find the information for themselves, and of pointing to a few of the difficulties which con-

front a student of the labours of these specialists, in the hope that some greater mind may at no distant date be induced to throw further light on the matter.

Finally, seeing that in the treatment of the Jewish Jeschu stories many things exceedingly distasteful to lovers of Jesus will have to be referred to, and that generally, in the whole enquiry, many points involved in the most violent controversy will have to be considered, let me say that I would most gladly have avoided them if it were possible. But a greater necessity than personal likes or dislikes compels the setting forth of the whole matter as it is found. We are told that the truth alone shall make us free; and the love of it compels us sometimes to deal with most distasteful matters. Few things can be more unpleasing than to be even the indirect means of giving pain to the sincere lovers of a great Teacher, but the necessities of the enquiry into the question: Did Jesus live 100 B.C.?—primarily involves a discussion of the Jewish Jeschu stories, and it is therefore impossible to omit them.

II.—THE CANONICAL DATE OF JESUS.

Ultra-
Scepticism.

THOSE who are familiar with the history of the innumerable controversies which have raged round the question of Christian origins, are aware that some of the disputants, appalled by the mass of mythic and mystic elements in the Gospel narratives, and dismayed at the contradictions in the apparently most simple data furnished by the evangelists, have not only not hesitated to reject the whole account as devoid of the slightest historical value, but have even gone so far as to deny that Jesus of Nazareth ever existed.¹

Most of these writers had presumably devoted much labour and thought to the subject before they reached a so startling conclusion; but I am inclined to think that their minds were of such a type that, even had they found less contradiction in the purely objective data of the Gospel documents, they would probably have still held the same opinion. Not only was their historic sense so distressed by the vast subjective element with which it was confronted

¹ See, for instance, Ganeval (L.), "Jésus devant l'Histoire n'a jamais Vécu : Réponse d'un Libre Penseur à M. l'Abbé Loyson" (Geneva; pt. i., 1874, pt. ii., 1875). There is also a pt. iii., but of this I have not been able to procure a copy.

that it could find relief only in the most strenuous efforts to reduce the historic validity of the residue to zero, but it found itself strongly confirmed in this determination by the fact that it could discover no scrap of unassailable external evidence, either in presumed contemporary literature, or even in the literature of the next two generations, whereby not merely the soberest incidents recounted by the Gospel writers, but even the very existence of Jesus, could be substantiated.

Though this extreme view, that Jesus of Nazareth Criticism. never existed, has perhaps to-day fewer adherents than it had some twenty years ago, the numbers of those who hold that the ideal picture of Jesus painted by the Gospel writers bears but a remote resemblance to its historical original, not only as to the doings, but also to a lesser extent as to the sayings, have increased so enormously that they can no longer be classed merely as a school, but must rather be considered as expressing a vast volume of educated opinion strongly influencing the thought of the times.

True, there is still a wide divergence of opinion on innumerable other points which are continually issuing into greater and greater prominence as the evolution of criticism proceeds. There is, however, no longer any necessity for the unfortunate student to make up his mind between what appeared to be the devil of undisguised antagonism on the one side and the deep sea of inerrant orthodox traditionalism on the other.

The problem is far more complex, far more subtle, and far greater numbers are interested in it. Whereas in the old days a mere handful, comparatively, had the

hardihood to venture between the seeming devil and the deep, to-day not only every theological student, but every intelligent enquirer, is forced to seek his information in the most recent books of reference available—books in which he finds that not only are innumerable questions raised on all sides concerning matters which were previously regarded as settled for all time, but also that opposing views are frankly and freely discussed.

The devil and the deep have almost faded away, and none but minds strongly prejudiced by anachronistic methods of training can discern the ancient crudity of their lineaments with any great distinctness. Concessions have been made on all sides; there is a studied moderation of language and a courtesy in treating the views of opponents which remove controversy from the cockpit of theological invective into the serener air of impersonal debate.

The Position
of the Lay-
man.

But how fares it with the thoughtful layman who is not sufficiently skilled in scholarly fence to appreciate the niceties of the sword-play of those who are presumably on either side seeking indirectly to win his applause? He is naturally exceedingly confused amid all the detail, and for the most part presumably applauds the view which best suits his preconceptions. But this much he gleans on all sides—a general impression that the ancient tyranny of an inerrant traditionalism is on its death-bed; he is assured that many of its bonds have been already struck from his limbs, and he lives in hope that before long he will be entirely free to try to realise what the worshipping of God in spirit and in truth may mean.

If he take up such recent works as the "Dictionary of the Bible," the "Encyclopædia Biblica," and the "Jewish Encyclopædia," he finds that, although in Old Testament subjects tradition has to all intents and purposes been practically almost abandoned by all scholars, in the treatment of New Covenant documents his authorities in the two former works still display a marked difference. The tendency of the contributors to the first above-mentioned work is still on fundamental points, as might very well be expected, conservative and largely apologetic of tradition (though by no means so aggressively so as has been the case in the past), while that of the essayists of the second is emphatically advanced, that is to say, departs widely from tradition, and in most cases breaks with it so entirely that even a reader who has not the slightest theological timidity is surprised at their hardihood.

The non-specialist is thus for the first time enabled to hear both sides distinctly on all points, and so to gain an intimate acquaintance with the arguments for and against traditionalism. And though he may not be able positively to decide on any special view as to details, or even as to the main fundamental points, he cannot fail to be vastly instructed and greatly relieved. For whatever may be the exact truth of the matter, this much he learns from the general tone of all the writers, that he is no longer thought to be in danger of losing his immortal soul if he find it impossible to believe in the inerrancy of tradition.

It results, then, that the ordinary reader is left without any certain guide in these matters; the old style of Bible repository which told you exactly what to

believe, and whose end was edification, is entirely foreign to the spirit of our latest books of reference. But though the reader is left without a guide (if external authority selected to suit a pre-conceived view can ever be a truly spiritual guide), he is inevitably thrown back on himself and made to think, and *that* is the beginning of a new era in general Christian instruction.

Such, then, is the general state of affairs brought about by the pronouncements of the occupants of the principal teaching chairs in Protestant Christendom ; and it is very evident that among their manifold pronouncements a man can find learned authority for almost any view he may choose to hold. He may, for instance, so select his authorities that he can arrive at the general conclusion that there is not a single document in the New Testament collection which is genuine in the old sense of the word ; he may even go further and refuse to be tied down to any particular "source" as genuine, seeing that there is such a diversity of opinion as to what are the precise sources. But if, while taking this critical attitude with regard to the canonical contents of Christian tradition, he would adopt a positive view on a point entirely negatived by that tradition, to retain his consistency he is bound to try to discover some strong ground for so doing.

Encyclo-
pædias ignore
our Problem.

Now, if we search the two great works to which we have referred for any authority in support of the hypothesis of the 100 years B.C. date of Jesus, we shall find none. Indeed, we cannot find even a reference to the subject. Moreover, in the very few encyclopædias of earlier date which make reference to the Talmud

Jeschu stories, we shall find that no Christian scholar has even dreamed of entertaining the possibility of such a hypothesis. In the older books of reference this universal abiding by tradition was to be expected, but in the most recent works, where tradition is so often set at naught and the most out-of-the-way material sifted for the smallest scrap of usable evidence, it seems at first sight somewhat strange, not only that there is no one courageous enough to suggest the possibility of there being some small grain of probability at the bottom of some of the Jewish legends, but that there is no notice whatever taken of them by any writer. It would appear that they are regarded either as being of a so utterly apocryphal nature as to deserve no mention, or as falling outside the scope of the undertaking.

But before we abandon our two dictionaries and search elsewhere, let us see what conclusions our most recent authorities come to concerning the traditional chronological data supplied by the evangelists.

As is well known, or ought to be known, it is to Dionysius Exiguus, who flourished in the sixth century, that we owe the custom of dating events from the supposed year of the birth of Jesus. Dionysius based himself on an artificial period which he borrowed from Victorius of Aquitaine, who flourished about a century before himself, and who is said to have been its inventor. It is hardly necessary to add that there is no scholar of repute nowadays who accepts the A.D. of Dionysius as coincident with the first year of the life of Jesus.

Recent Research on the Date of the Nativity.

Turner, of Oxford, in his article on the "Chronology of the New Testament," in Hastings' "Dictionary of the

Bible," sums up his conclusions somewhat positively as follows :

"The Nativity in B.C. 7-6.

"The age of our Lord at the Baptism, thirty years more or less.

"The Baptism in A.D. 26 (26-27).

"The duration of the ministry between two or three years.

"The Crucifixion in A.D. 29."

In the "Encyclopædia Biblica," von Soden of Berlin, under "Chronology," reaches the somewhat less positive results :

"Birth of Jesus—*circa* 4 B.C. ?

"Beginning of public work—*circa* 28-29 A.D.

"Death of Jesus—30 A.D."

Von Soden assigns one year only to the ministry.

The variations, however, are so inconsiderable that these scholars may be said to be fairly agreed on the method of treating the traditional data. They both abandon the statement in the third Gospel that Jesus was born at the time of the general census under Cyrenius (Publ. Sulpicius Quirinius), which is well attested by Josephus as having taken place 6-7 A.D. Von Soden, like so many other scholars, is of opinion that "the account in Lk. rests on a series of mistakes." Usener of Bonn, in his article on the "Nativity" ("Enc. Bib."), in discussing these "chronological difficulties which learned subtlety has struggled with for centuries," also definitely abandons the Quirinius date. Turner, however, while stating that "St. Luke is in error in the name of Quirinius," thinks that there is "no inherent improbability in the hypothesis of a census in Judæa

somewhere within the years B.C. 8-5." He seems in this census question faintly to endorse Ramsay, who—in his study, "Was Christ born at Bethlehem?" (London; 1898)—put forward a thorough-going apology for this statement of the third evangelist, which has been welcomed with great delight by traditionalists. Turner mentions the hypothesis that the missing name in a mutilated inscription which records that someone was twice governor of Syria, was that of Quirinius, and that there was another census during his first term of office. Unfortunately even so this would not help us, for, as he points out, the period B.C. 10 to Herod's death, B.C. 4 (which is our limit for the reconciliation of the Herod date of the first evangelist with the Quirinius date of the third), is exhausted by the known tenures of other governors. Moreover, Ramsay's thesis has been well answered by J. Thomas in his exhaustive reply, "Records of the Nativity" (London; 1900).

But all this is practically a side issue as compared with the strength of the main tradition, for the question of the nativity concerns the problem of the historicity of the single traditions only of the first and third Gospel writers. Either or both may be in error, and even the John the Baptist element may be a later development, and yet the fundamental chronological element of the main tradition would be entirely unaffected.

All four evangelists make the drama of the trial and death of Jesus take place under the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate (26-36 A.D.). This is the main chronological factor in the whole of the puzzling details; and no matter how far we may succeed in any attempt at

The Pilate
Date.

reducing it to its simplest terms, it remains the *crux* of the whole problem.

But before considering the statements of the Gospel writers, it will be as well to deal with the other references to Pilate in the New Covenant documents. These are Acts iii. 13, and iv. 27, and 1 Timothy vi. 13.

In the Acts.

The references in Acts are found in a speech put into the mouth of Peter and in a prayer (in the same style as the speeches) which is said to have been uttered with a common impulse by the friends of the apostles.

Now, in the judgment of many scholars, one of the most certain results of criticism with regard to the Acts, is that the speeches are the most artificial element in the book. As Schmiedel says (art. "Acts of the Apostles," "Enc. Bib."): "It is without doubt that the author constructed them in each case according to his own conception of the situation." Even Headlam, the writer of the conservative article in Hastings' "Dictionary," admits that the speeches are "clearly in a sense" the author's "own compositions," though he adds "there is no reason for thinking *a priori* that the speeches [? substance of the speeches] cannot be historical."

It is then exceedingly probable that the references to Pilate derive immediately from the writer of the Acts himself. And as the writer of the Acts is, on the ground of similarity of language, identified by most scholars with the writer of the third Gospel, the authority for his references to Pilate in all likelihood go back to his "sources." There are few who would be bold enough to argue for the preservation of an earlier tradition in the Acts than in the sources of the writer of the third Gospel.

The references in the Acts, therefore, will not be held by the ordinary critical, much less by the sceptical, mind to be an independent confirmation of the Gospel tradition with regard to Pilate.

As to the reference in 1 Timothy, its value as an unimpeachable early witness is at once discounted by the general character of the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus).

In the
Pastoral
Epistles.

McClymont of Aberdeen, the conservative writer of the article "The New Testament," in Hastings' "Dictionary," frankly states that these so-called Pastoral Letters "are distinguished from all others by their want of historical agreement with any period in St. Paul's life as recorded in the Bk. of Acts, and also by their strongly-marked individuality alike in style and substance"—circumstances which "have given rise to serious doubt of their genuineness." This, however, he thinks may be "largely obviated" by supposing them to have been written in the last year of the apostle's life. But though this supposition may overcome the Acts difficulty, it does not in the slightest way affect the main argument of difference of style and substance.

Deissmann of Heidelberg, in the "Encyclopædia Biblica" (art. "Epistolary Literature"), while he has no doubts as to the genuineness of ten of the Pauline Letters, with regard to the Pastoral Epistles can only allow at best that they "may perhaps contain fragments from genuine letters of Paul."

Very different is the view, in the same work, of van Manen of Leyden, the distinguished Dutch specialist, to whom the summary of the "Later Criticism" in the

article "Paul" has been entrusted. Van Manen emphatically repudiates the genuineness not only of the Pastoral but of the whole of the rest of the Letters traditionally ascribed to Paul. Though the rest of the Letters do not immediately concern us in this study, it may be of interest very briefly to set down the general result of this later criticism; for it is not the opinion of an isolated scholar, but the outcome of the studies of a school. I do this the more readily because it conflicts with my own previously expressed view that the ten Letters of the Marcionite collection were largely authentic. Van Manen writes:

Van Manen
on Pauline
Literature.

"With respect to the canonical Pauline Epistles, the later criticism here under consideration has learned to recognise that they are none of them by Paul; neither fourteen, nor thirteen, nor nine or ten, nor seven or eight, nor yet even the four so long 'universally' regarded as unassailable."

This criticism "is unable any longer in all simplicity to hold by the canonical Acts and epistles, or even to the epistles solely, or yet to a selection of them. The conclusion it has to reckon with is this: (a) That we possess no epistles of Paul; that the writings which bear his name are pseudepigrapha containing seemingly historical data from the life and labours of the apostle, which nevertheless must not be accepted as correct without closer examination, and are probably, at least for the most part, borrowed from 'Acts of Paul' which also underlie our canonical book of Acts. (b) Still less does the Acts of the Apostles give us, however incompletely, an absolutely historical narrative of Paul's career; what it gives is a variety of narratives con-

cerning him, differing in their dates and also in respect of the influences under which they were written. Historical criticism must, as far as lies in its power, learn to estimate the value of what has come down to us through both channels, Acts and epistles, to compare them, to arrange them and bring them into consistent and orderly connection."

That it will ever be able, on van Manen's lines, to bring these contradictory data into "consistent and orderly connection," we have but little hope; for once the comparative genuineness of the main Pauline Letters is given up, there is no possible criterion left. However, the courageous attempt uncompromisingly to face the difficulties is the earnest of the dawn of a new age in Christian thought, and we ourselves ask for nothing better than that the facts should be faced.

It results then from this view (again to quote van Manen) that "the Paulinism of the lost Acts of Paul and of our best authority for that way of thinking, our canonical epistles of Paul, is not the 'theology,' the 'system' of the historical Paul, although it ultimately came to be, and in most quarters still is, identified with it. It is the later development of a school, or, if the expression is preferred, of a circle, of progressive believers who named themselves after Paul and placed themselves as it were under his ægis."

Where this circle must be looked for geographically cannot be said with any certainty. This much, however, is evident, that "it was an environment where no obstruction was in the first instance encountered from the Jews or, perhaps still worse, from the

'disciples' too closely resembling them; where men as friends of gnosis, of speculation and of mysticism, probably under the influence of Greek and, more especially, Alexandrian philosophy, had learned to cease to regard themselves as bound by tradition, and felt themselves free to extend their flight in every direction. To avail ourselves of a somewhat later expression: it was among the heretics. The epistles first came to be placed on the list among the Gnostics. The oldest witnesses to their existence, as Meyer and other critics with a somewhat wonderful unanimity have been declaring for more than half a century, are Basilides, Valentinus, Heracleon. Marcion is the first in whom, as we learn from Tertullian, traces are to be found of an authoritative group of epistles of Paul. Tertullian still calls him the 'apostle of heretics' and (addressing Marcion) '*your* apostle.'

This latter view is confirmatory of our own contention with regard to the important part played by the Gnostics in the development of general Christian doctrine, and we are pleased to notice the phrase "to avail ourselves of a somewhat *later* expression: it was among the heretics."

But to return to our reference to Pilate in 1 Timothy. We see that there is no reason why we should assign an early date to this Letter, and every reason why we should hesitate to do so. Marcion (about 140 A.D.) says nothing about it; it was not in his Pauline canon. That is of course negative evidence, but of positive we have none. It may very well have existed, indeed most probably did exist, in Marcion's day, for his collection

had to satisfy a doctrinal and not a historic test. Van Manen does not attempt to suggest dates for any of the individual Epistles, though he seems to date his "circle" about 120; he, moreover, assigns 130-150 to the Acts, a date which agrees with our own conclusions. For if, as we conclude, the third Gospel was written about 125-130, and if the same hand, as many hold, also wrote the Acts, 130-150 may very well represent the *termini* of the date of that document's autograph. It is, however, to be remembered that Justin Martyr (c. 150) knows nothing of the Acts even when referring to Simon Magus, a reference which he could not have omitted had he known of it, and one which all subsequent heresiologists triumphantly set in the forefront of their "refutations" of that famous heretic; and that there is no clear quotation from the Acts known till 177 A.D.

In any case the reference in 1 Timothy cannot very well be held to be a less assailable witness to the antiquity of the Pilate tradition, we will not say than the writer of the third Gospel, but than the author of his main "source."

The strongest current of the tradition is traced in the fact that the Pilate date is given confidently by all four evangelists. It matters little whether we place the date of the autograph of the fourth Gospel later than those of the synoptic writers, and assume that the writer of the former had the letter of the latter before him, or prefer to think that he had independent access to the same main sources. In either case his authority, as far as Pilate is concerned, will not presumably be held to rest on firmer ground than that of the author of the

The Pilate
Tradition in
the Gospels.

"common document," or "common material," or whatever we may call it, of the synoptic tradition.¹

The widely-held view of the priority of Mark, or of "original Mark," labours under so many disadvantages that with many others I prefer the simpler hypothesis of a written source (distinct from our present Mark or its autograph) underlying the matter common to all three synoptics, the simplest form of which, however, is still preserved in canonical Mark. It is almost as certain as anything can be in all this uncertainty that Pilate was distinctly named in the form of this document which all three evangelists used, and which the fourth Gospel writer also knew either directly or by intermediary of the writings of his contemporaries, for I do not hold that they were necessarily his predecessors. But what is most striking is the abrupt and unsupported way in which the name of Pilate was apparently introduced in the "common document." It is true that the writer, or maybe an early editor, of the first Gospel seems to have felt compelled slightly to lessen this abruptness by adding "the governor" after the name Pilate, and that the writer of the fourth speaks first of the "government house." But the Mark and Luke documents make it appear that the common source they used was either setting forth some statement that was well known to all, or that it had already made fuller reference to Pilate, perhaps in its opening

¹ See my recent work, "The Gospels and the Gospel : A Study in the most recent Results of the Lower and the Higher Criticism" (London, 1902), in which I conclude for about 120-130 A.D. as the most probable date for the form in which we now have them.

sentences. And this later hypothesis I find would be the opinion of van Manen, who, in his article on "Old Christian Literature," writes:

"The gospels, on close comparison, point us back to an 'oldest' written gospel which unfortunately does not exist for us except in so far as we can recover traces of it preserved in later recensions. Perhaps it began somewhat as follows: In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, . . . there came down to Capernaum . . . Jesus . . ."

The "Oldest"
Written
Gospel.

It is to be remarked, however, that Marcion's gospel apparently did not contain this introduction, but began abruptly "He came down to Capernaum." Whether or no Marcion had direct access to the "common document" used by our synoptists it is impossible to say; but I am somewhat inclined to think that that document originally derived from a "Gnostic" environment, and if we had any information concerning the "traditions of Matthias," the penultimate link between Basilido-Valentinian circles and the origins, we should probably be put on the track of the parentage of our common synoptic source.

It is from considerations of this nature that I have not insisted upon the otherwise apparently equally strong confirmation of the date of Jesus in the fact that all four evangelists emphatically assert that He was a contemporary of John the Baptist, whose existence is historically vouched for by Josephus ("Antiqq.," xviii. v. 2); it might be said that John was not mentioned in this "oldest" written Gospel, and that the omission by the earlier writers of a factor

which has been made so much of by all the later Gospel writers argues that it was not known in his day. My main interest has been to select the strongest link in the chain of tradition, namely the Pilate date.

We have thus traced our Pilate tradition to the "common document" used by the synoptic evangelists. Beyond that we cannot go with any certainty; the rest is pure speculation, in the absence of objective data of any kind. We cannot date the autograph of the common document; we do not know whether it passed through any recensions before it reached the hands of the canonical evangelists; we do not know whether it was originally written in Greek or Hebrew or Aramaic; we do not know whether the synoptists worked on the copy of an original, or on a translation, or made their own translations; we do not know what other contemporary documents were in existence, though it is quite certain, according to the statement of the writer of the third Gospel, that there were "many" others.

Now it is to be noticed that the writer of the "common document," as seen in the simplest form preserved by Mark, puts all the blame of Jesus' condemnation on the chief priests and says very little about Pilate. This is remarkable, for we know the bitter hatred of the Jews for the Romans, and, what is still more to the point, we know from Josephus that the memory of Pilate especially was most bitterly detested by the Jews.

On the other hand, in those days of political suspicion owing to the many revolutionary cabals among the Jews, it was exceedingly dangerous for a Jewish writer, or for those generally identified with the

Jews, as the Christians still were, to speak against the Imperial rulers or their officers, and it was the custom of the writers of the very numerous politico-religious writings of the time, of which we have examples in the still extant specimens of pseudepigraphic and apocalyptic literature, to disguise the real objects of their detestation by throwing their matter into prophetic form, where the present or immediate past was written of as yet to come, and where the names of the actual persons were altered or hidden under symbol and metaphor.

The direct mention of the name of Pilate in the "common document," then, seems to point to another order of literature; and it may be hazarded that perhaps it may even have been partially encouraged by the imperial favour so recently bestowed on Josephus' "History of the Jewish War." But whatever validity there may be in such a speculation, the practical exculpation of Pilate seems to point to a time when Christianity was seeking to dissociate itself from Jewry in the eyes of the Roman world. Can we in any way fix a probable date for this state of affairs? It is very difficult to do so, but *termini* may be suggested. We glean from an analysis of history that up to at least the end of the first century the Christians were indiscriminately classed with the Jews by the authorities. The Jews were the objects of frequent repression and persecution at the hands of the Roman magistracy; but not on religious grounds. They were regarded as political revolutionaries. The antagonism between Jewish Christians and Jews is said by some learned Talmudists to have developed acutely only in Trajan's

The Date of
the "Common Document."

reign (A.D. 98-117),¹ but the entire separation probably did not take place till Hadrian's (A.D. 117-138). In this they base themselves on Talmudic data. But how many years elapsed before the antagonism reached this acute stage? We cannot say; but we may with very great confidence fix the very latest limit for our common document in the first years of the second century. For our earliest limit, however, we have nothing to help us, except the consideration that the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was a crushing blow to the hopes of those who looked for a material fulfilment of Messianic prophecy, and the very thing to strengthen the position of those who took a more spiritual view of Messianism, as was the case in the inner communities, and who were more content to bow to the inevitable and therefore to reconcile themselves with the rulers.

The Strength
of the Tradition.

But even if we were to assume the higher limit of our common document as about 75 A.D., at this comparatively early date, whatever may have been the rights of the dispute as to who was the more to blame for it, the death of Jesus under Pilate was a bald fact that could presumably have been most readily verified; if it were untrue, it is most difficult to believe that it could have got a footing for a moment even among the most credulous. The bitter opponents of the Christians among the Jews would have at once retorted: Why, there was no such trial under Pilate at all!

¹ See Joël (M.), "Blicke in die Religionsgeschichte zu Anfang des zweiten christlichen Jahrhunderts" (Breslau; 1880), i. 14-41, and ii. 87 ff.; see also Graetz (H. H.), "Geschichte der Juden" (Leipzig; 1865, 2nd. ed.), iv. 90 ff.

On the other hand, the name of Pilate may have been inserted in some intermediate redaction of the "common document" before it reached the hands of the evangelists ; with the lapse of time, and the destruction of records, and the development of Christianity outside Palestine among the Dispersion, the difficulty of verification would thus be greatly increased. It might be even that the document originally simply stated that Jesus was brought before the "Governor," and the name of Pilate was subsequently added in a desire for greater precision, in the "haggadic" fashion of the time.

Whatever may be the truth of the matter, the Pilate date has every appearance of being as strong an historical element as any other in the whole tradition. It bears on its face the appearance of a most candid statement, and the introduction of the name, had there been no warrant for it, argues such a lack of what we to-day consider historical morality, that it is without parallel except in the pseudepigraphic and apocalyptic literature of the period.

III.—EARLIEST EXTERNAL EVIDENCE TO THE RECEIVED DATE.

The Absence
of Evidence
in the First
Century.

IN our last chapter we dealt with the date of Jesus according to the accepted canonical sources, and endeavoured to track out the main strength of the tradition preserved by the synoptic writers. The result of this investigation was that the probabilities seemed to be strongly in favour of our possessing a historical fact in the statement that Jesus was a contemporary of Pilate. We now turn to a consideration of the earliest external evidence.

It has always been an unfailing source of astonishment to the historical investigator of Christian beginnings, that there is not one single word from the pen of any Pagan writer of the first century of our era, which can in any fashion be referred to the marvellous story recounted by the Gospel writers. The very existence of Jesus seems unknown.

It can hardly be that there were once notices, but that they were subsequently suppressed by Christian copyists because of their hostile or even scandalous nature, for inimical notices of a later date have been preserved. The reason for this silence is doubtless to be discovered in the fact that Christianity was con-

founded with Judaism, no distinction being made between them in the minds of non-Jewish writers. Converts to Christianity were held to be proselytes to Judaism, and it was a matter of no importance to a Roman what particular sect of Jewry a convert might join. Such a question as what particular phase of Messianism the Judæi might be agitated about never occurred to him; circumcision or uncircumcision had no interest for him. He had a vague idea that the Judæi were a turbulent folk politically dangerous to the state, that they had a strange superstition and were haters of the human race, and there he left it.

As, then, we can find nothing about the Christians in Pagan writers of the first century, we turn to our earliest notices of the second century as found in the writings of Pliny the Younger, Suetonius and Tacitus.

All three were men who held imperial offices, were well known at court, and presumably had access to the archives of the empire. All three were distinguished writers and historians, and probably all three were personal friends. We know for a fact from his letters that Pliny and Tacitus were intimate friends, and also that Pliny and Suetonius were friendly correspondents.

Pliny was born 61 A.D., his greatest literary activity was in the reign of Trajan, but as to whether or no he survived his imperial master (d. 117) we have no information. Tacitus was of the same age as Pliny and survived Trajan, but the exact date of his death is unknown. Suetonius was some ten years younger, being born about 70-71 A.D.; he was private secretary to Hadrian (emp. 117-138 A.D.), but the year of his death also is unknown.

Pliny the
Younger.

If we, then, first turn to the famous letter of Pliny to Trajan and to Trajan's reply ("Letters," x. 96, 97), we shall find much to interest us concerning the Christians of distant Pontus and Bithynia who came up for trial before Pliny as Proprætor, but nothing in either Pliny's report or in the presumed rescript of the Emperor that will give us the smallest clue to the date of Jesus. But even had we found in this correspondence direct or indirect confirmation of the traditional date, we should still have had to consider the arguments of those who have contended either that both pieces are forgeries or that interpolations have been made in the original text.¹ If, however, we have a genuine letter of Pliny before us, and I am inclined to think it largely genuine, it is with very great probability to be assigned to the year 112 A.D.;² but as the question of the date and genuineness of this correspondence does not immediately concern us (for in it we can find nothing to help our present investigation), we pass to the statements of Suetonius.

Suetonius.

There are two short sentences in Suetonius' "Lives of the Twelve Cæsars" (from Julius Cæsar to Domitian—*i.e.*, to 96 A.D.), both of which appear to refer to the Christians. In his Life of Claudius (emp. 41–54 A.D.) Suetonius tells us (ch. xxv.), that the Emperor banished the Jews, or certain Jews, from Rome because of the

¹ On the literature see Platner's (S.B.) "Bibliography of the Younger Pliny" (Western Reserve University, Ohio; 1895); also Wilde (C. G. I.), S.J., "De C. Plinii Caecilii Secundi et Imp. Trajani Epp. mutuis Disputatio" (Leyden; 1889), who, while maintaining their genuineness, gives a summary of contrary opinions.

² See Mommsen (T.), "Hermes" (1869), iii. 53.

persistent disturbances which arose among them "*impulsore Chresto*."

For long fierce controversy has raged round these two words, which we may translate by the phrase "at the instigation of Chrestus" (lit., "Chrestus being the *impulsor*").

It is contended on strong philological grounds that this must refer to a living person.¹ It has thus been supposed by some to refer simply to a Jew called Chrestus who was then living at Rome; but this seems to me to be a very unsatisfactory explanation. For we know that "Chrestus" is still sometimes found in MSS. where we should expect "Christus"; we know further that Tertullian ("Apol.," iii.), at the beginning of the third century, accuses the Romans of so mispronouncing the name of Christ, and from Lactantius ("Institt.," iv. 7), a century later, that it was still a common custom.

It is not necessary here to enquire whether this confusion of Christus and Chrestus was really only an ignorant mistake on the part of non-Christians, or whether there may not be some further explanation of the phenomenon;² an outsider like Suetonius would anyhow not be likely to know the difference, and so we may very well in this passage take Chrestus for Christus.

¹ See Smilda (H.), "C. Suetonii Tranquilli Vita Divi Claudii" (Gröningen; 1896), p. 124, n.; also Schiller (H.), "Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit" (Gotha; 1883), i. 447, n. 6.

² The most ancient dated Christian inscription (Oct. 1, 318 A.D.) runs "The Lord and Saviour Jesus the Good"—*Chrestos*, not *Christos*. This was the legend over the door of a Marcionite Church, and the Marcionites were Anti-Jewish Gnostics, and did not confound their Chrestos with the Jewish Christos (Messiah).

But even so we are confronted with the difficulty that according to the received tradition the Christian Christ was never at Rome, and did not survive to the reign of Claudius.

Moreover, if it be argued that Suetonius does not employ the phrase "*impulsore Chresto*" literally, but intended it to carry a metaphorical meaning, even so we have to remember that Christus does not necessarily refer to Jesus. *Christos* is simply the Greek for the Hebrew *Messiah*, the "anointed," and at this period there were many claiming to be this "anointed." The reference may then be simply to a Messianic riot of some sort among the Jews.¹

The "Christiani."

When, then, we come across the term "Christiani" in Pagan writers referring to disturbances of the first century, we are not to assume offhand that those thus designated must necessarily have been followers of Jesus of Nazareth; they may on the contrary have been simply Jewish Messianists, and most probably of the Zealot type. And this may be argued to be the case when Suetonius, in the second of his famous sentences, in his Life of Nero (emp. 54-68), tells us (c. xvi.) that certain "Christiani" were severely punished or put to the torture; these he characterises as "a class of people who believed in a new and noxious superstition." This might apply to Messianists, for the Romans had been compelled to deal with many disturbances of this nature in Palestine in the reigns of Tiberius, Claudius and Nero, and doubtless tumults of a similar character had arisen among the Jews of the Dispersion as well.

¹ See Schiller (H.), "Geschichte des römischen Kaiserreichs unter der Regierung des Nero" (Berlin; 1872), p. 434.

But we cannot be sure that this is the meaning of Suetonius, even if the question were not rendered far more complicated by what is found in Tacitus on the subject. Least of all can we dispose of the difficulty by assuming that the two sentences in Suetonius are interpolations by a Christian hand, for it is almost impossible to believe that any Christian could have used such phraseology.

We, therefore, finally turn to the famous passage in Tacitus. Tacitus ("Ann.," xv. 44), where we find it clearly stated that the Christians were so called from a certain Christus who in the reign of Tiberius was put to death under Pontius Pilate. This statement occurs in a brief but graphic account of the horrible cruelties which these Christiani are said to have suffered under Nero. It was in connection with the Great Fire at Rome in 64 A.D. Tacitus will have it that it was commonly believed at the time that the conflagration had been started by the express orders of the Emperor himself. To divert the public mind and remove this imputation, Nero had singled out the Christiani to play the part of scapegoat, seeing that they were held in general detestation for their evil practices. They were accused, put to the torture, condemned and done to death with refinements of cruelty.

From the time of Gibbon, however, it has been strongly questioned whether at that date Christians were numerous enough at Rome to have been so singled out, and it has been accordingly maintained that the fury of the populace had been vented simply on the Jews in general, seeing that the fire had broken out in their quarter; in short, that Tacitus is in error and has

transferred the popular detestation of the Christians in his own day to the times of Nero.

In this connection we have to recall the short sentence in Suetonius which apparently refers to the same event when we read Tacitus, but which seems to have nothing to do with it when we read Suetonius. We can further speculate as to whether Suetonius may have derived his information from Tacitus, or Tacitus may have embellished the statement of Suetonius.¹ But surely if Suetonius had had the passage of Tacitus before him, and had believed in his great contemporary's view of the matter, he would have made more use of his graphic details? It seems far more probable that Suetonius is reproducing the dry bones of some brief official record, while Tacitus, in working out a character sketch of Nero from insufficient data, and with a strong prejudice against him, has collected together unrelated events, and painted them in with the gaudiest colours of a vivid imagination excited by some tragic stories he had heard concerning the Christians of a later time and of his own day.²

But it is not so much the persecution of Christians

¹ Schmiedel (art. "Christian, Name of," "Enc. Bib.") gives the date of the passage in Tacitus as 116-117, and of those in Suetonius as 120 A.D., but this is unproved.

² See Bruno Bauer, "Christus und die Caesaren: Der Ursprung des Christenthums aus dem römischen Griechenthum" (Berlin; 1879; 2nd ed.). That in general Tacitus is a historical romancist who has too long fascinated schoolmasters and their pupils by the beauty of his style, and not a sober historian, is an accepted judgment among competent historical scholars. See especially Tarver (J. C.), "Tiberius the Tyrant" (London; 1902); Tarver gives a totally different estimate of Tiberius from the caricature of Tacitus, to whom the good fame of an anti-senatorial emperor was of far less importance than the neat turning of a phrase.

under Nero that concerns us, as the explicit statement that the Christiani whom Tacitus has in mind, were the followers of that Christus who was put to death under Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius. If this statement is from the pen of Tacitus, and if it was based on information derived from Roman records, there is nothing more to be said. The positive answer to our question has been found, and the accepted date of Jesus stands firm.

The famous sentence runs as follows : “ *Auctor nominis ejus Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat.*”

Is it a Christian Formula ?

Let us first of all assume its genuineness, that is that we have before us a sentence written by Tacitus himself. Even so, it is very difficult to persuade oneself that the statement is derived from some official Roman record. On the contrary it has all the appearance of being part of a Christian formula. Surely in an official record we should not have the name of Pilate introduced with no further qualification than simply that of Procurator. Procurator of what ? “ In the reign of Tiberius under Pilate the Governor ” would mean something definite to a Christian, for he would know that the whole story of Christus had to do with Judæa, but to a Roman the phrase would convey nothing of a very precise nature. Later on in the Tacitean narrative it is true we are told the Christian sect arose in Judæa, but on the other hand we must remember that it is just this sudden “ Pilate the Governor ” which meets us in our investigation of the synoptic tradition, as we showed in our last chapter. It might then (if the sentence is genuine) be of interest to determine the date of writing of this

part of the "Annals," but this is impossible to do with any exactitude. It seems, however, probable that it was written subsequently to 117 A.D., a date when the Pilate formula was indubitably firmly established among Christian circles.

It is also to be noticed that Tacitus seems to know nothing of the name of Jesus; and it is exceedingly improbable that in any official record the proper name of the person would be omitted, and a name used which officials familiar with Palestinian affairs must have known to be a general title which was at that time being claimed by many. Moreover, Jesus was not, according to the canonical tradition, accused of being a claimant to Messiahship, a matter which did not concern the Roman magistrates, but with the political offence of claiming to be King of the Jews. It is then far more probable that Tacitus derived his information from hearsay, and imagined that Christus was the actual and only name of the founder of the Christian sect.

Is it an Inter-
polation ?

But all these considerations depend upon the assumption that we have a genuine sentence of Tacitus before us. Now it has been often pointed out that "*Tiberio imperitante*" is entirely opposed to all Tacitean usage. It cannot be paralleled elsewhere in his vocabulary, and moreover is contrary to regular use. The early Emperors were still regarded solely as heads of the Republic, and as such were called Principes; we should, therefore, expect "*Principe Tiberio*," or some such combination. Philological arguments, however, as a rule, are seldom very convincing; but it is not very easy to dispose of the present one offhand. The sentence,

moreover, has a strong appearance of being inserted in the rest of the narrative. Many, therefore, consider it an interpolation, and some even are of opinion that the whole of the chapter is a fabrication. As Hochart says: "This chapter contains almost as many inexplicable difficulties as it does words."¹

But this laborious scholar represents the extreme left wing of Tacitean criticism, and valuable as is his work in bringing out the difficulties which have to be surmounted before we can be positive that the whole chapter under discussion—(much more than the sentence which specially interests us)—is not, as he contends,² an interpolation, his authority is somewhat weakened by his subsequent lengthy researches,³ in which he courageously revived the whole question of the authenticity of the famous MS., purporting to contain the last six books of the "Annals" and the first five of the "Histories" of Tacitus, which was first brought to light about 1429 by Poggio Bracciolini and Niccoli—the sole MS. from which all copies have since been made. Hochart maintains that in the very learned humanist Poggio himself we have a Pseudo-Tacitus, and that in these books of the "Histories" and "Annals" we are therefore face to face with an elaborate pseudepigraph.

¹ "Annales de la Faculté des Lettres de Bordeaux," 1884, No. 2.

² Hochart (P.), "Études au Sujet de la Persécution des Chrétiens sous Néron" (Paris; 1885). For arguments in favour of its genuineness see Arnold (C. F.), "Die neronische Christenverfolgung" (Leipzig; 1888).

³ "De l'Authenticité des Annales et des Histoires de Tacite" (Paris; 1890), p. 320; and "Nouvelles Considérations au Sujet des Annales et des Histoires de Tacite" (Paris; 1894), p. 293.

On the whole, however, I am inclined to think that the strain of supporting this conclusion is too great for even the most robust scepticism (though it may be that stranger things have happened in literature). In any case it does not affect the main point of our argument—namely, that, admitting the genuineness of the chapter and even of the sentence which specially concerns our enquiry, we cannot be sure that we have in it a confirmation of the canonical tradition of the Pilate date from an independent source.

Josephus.

We have, then, passed in review our earliest notices in the works of Pagan writers of the second century, and may next turn our attention to that Jewish writer of the first century who above all others might be expected to supply us with the certainty of which we are in search.

Joseph ben Mattatiah, the priest, or, to use the name he adopted in honour of the Flavian House, Flavius Josephus, was born 37–38 A.D. and survived till at least 100 A.D. His father Matthias was a member of one of the high priestly families, was learned in the Law and held in high repute in Jerusalem. Matthias was thus a contemporary of Pilate, and should therefore have been an eye-witness of those wonderful events in Jerusalem which the Gospel narratives so graphically depict in connection with the death of Jesus; he might even have been expected to have taken part in them; at the very least he could not have failed to have heard of them if they actually occurred in the way in which they are described.

Josephus, if we can accept his own account of himself, was from his earliest years trained in the Law and had

an insatiable love of religious learning. When he was but fourteen years old, he tells us, the high priests and doctors used to come to ask him questions on difficult points of the Torah and its traditions. This may of course refer simply to his wonderful memory, in the exercise of which for the most part such learning consisted; but over and beyond this, we are told, he was most eagerly anxious to know and practise the inner side of religion, and busily enquired into the tenets of all the sects of Jewry. For three years he retired to the desert, apparently to some Essene-like community, and submitted himself to its vigorous discipline. In 64 A.D., at the age of twenty-six, we find him at Rome interested in obtaining the freedom of some friends of his, priests who even in prison refused all Gentile fare and managed to support themselves on the ascetic diet of figs and nuts.

During the Jewish War Josephus was given the important command of Galilee, and displays an intimate knowledge of the country in which, according to the Gospel tradition, was the chief scene of the ministry of Jesus. As a self-surrendered prisoner in the hands of the Romans he played a very important part in the hastening of the end of the war, and was subsequently held in high estimation by the rulers of the Empire and devoted himself to writing a history of his people and an account of the war. Many additional reasons could be adduced, but enough has already been said to show why Josephus, who might be called the "historian of the Messianic age," is just the very writer who might be expected to tell us something decisive about the Christians and their origins. Nor can the detestation

of the Jews for the memory of the "traitor," which makes them still regard every line of his writings about those days with exaggerated suspicion, in any way lessen the authority of Josephus in this respect; for the complaint of Christians against him is not that he misrepresents them or their beginnings, but that he absolutely ignores their existence.

The Spurious
Passage.

It is true that we have that famous passage in his "Antiquities" (xviii. iii. 3) which amply and doctrinally confirms the Gospel tradition; but how a so transparent forgery could have escaped detection in even the most uncritical age is a marvel. For many years it has been abandoned by all schools of criticism, even the most conservative, and we have only to turn to any modern translation or text to find it definitely characterised as an interpolation or enclosed in brackets.¹ It is not only that we are confronted with upwards of a dozen most potent arguments against its authenticity, but that we have also the explicit statement of Origen in the third century that Josephus (with whose works he was acquainted, and whom he is quoting to prove the historic existence of John the Baptist) had no belief whatever in Jesus being the Christ,² whereas the spurious passage states categorically that he was *the* Christ. Nevertheless, there are still a few daring scholars who, while admitting that it is heavily interpolated, en-

¹ See, for instance, F. Kaulen's German translation, "Flavius Josephus' jüdische Alterthümer" (Köln; 1892, 3rd ed.), p. 620, n.; and B. Niese's critical text, "Flavii Josephi Opera" (Berlin; 1890), iv. pp. 151, 152. The most recent French translation, edited by T. Reinach, "Œuvres complètes de Flavius Josèphe" (Paris; 1900), has so far given us only five books of the "Antiquities."

² Origen, "Contra Celsum," i. 47.

deavour to save some fragments of the passage,¹ and even one stalwart apologist who maintains its complete genuineness.²

But if there be anything certain in the whole field of criticism, it is that this passage was never written by Josephus. And this being so, the reference (in "Antiqq.," xx. ix. 1) to a certain Jacobus, "the brother of Jesus called Christ," constitutes the only reference to Jesus in the voluminous writings of Josephus which Origen could discover; but unfortunately the statement of Origen casts grave doubts upon the words "brother of Jesus called Christ," for he twice³ declares that Josephus describes the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple as a divine retribution for the murder of this James—a most highly improbable opinion to father upon Josephus, and no trace of which is to be found either in the passage in which the phrase we are considering now stands, or in the rest of Josephus' works. It is therefore exceedingly probable that this epithet was taken from Origen and incorporated into the text of Josephus by later scribes. These being the only references that can be adduced in the voluminous writings of the Jewish historian, it follows that Josephus knows nothing of "*the* Christ," though he knows much of various "Christs."

Though the argument from silence must in all cases be received with the greatest caution, it cannot fail

The Jacobus
Passage.

The Silence
of Josephus.

¹ See Müller (G. A.), "Christus bei Josephus Flavius" (Innsbrück; 1895, 2nd ed.); and Reinach (T.), "Rev. Étud. Juives," xxxv. 1-18.

² Bole (F.), "Flavius Josephus über Christus und die Christen" (Brixen; 1896).

³ Origen, "Contra Celsum," i. 47, ii. 13.

deeply to impress us in the case of Joseph ben Mattathiah; for it is almost humanly impossible that, if the details of the Christian tradition and the affairs of the Christian world had been historically in the time of Josephus just what they are stated to have been in our canonical documents, the historian of that special age and country could have kept silence concerning them. If these things were just as they are said to have been, there is no convincing reason that we can assign for the silence of a man who, like Josephus, was in a most admirable position to know about them.

Josephus had been trained in an Essene-like community and seems even to have gone to Rome in "Essene" interests. He is just the man to tell us of those early Christian communities which were formed on models closely resembling those of the Pious and the Poor and the Naked. He goes to Rome just when Paul is also said to have been there, and no doubt was there, and just about the time when, if we are to believe Tacitus, the Christiani were singled out for public persecution and cruel martyrdom by Imperial tyranny; and yet he knows nothing of all this. With regard to the ministry and death of Jesus it might be said that all this had happened before Josephus was born, though surely it might be expected that his father would have told him of such stirring, nay overwhelming, events; still it is strange that with regard to the gruesome tragedy at Rome he apparently knows not even so much as of a community of Christians.

Was, then, the story in those days other than we have it now? Were the origins of Christianity, as we have elsewhere suggested, hidden among the pledged

members of the mystic communities and ascetic orders, and only imperfectly known among their outer circles, which were also largely held to secrecy? Was it all of older date than we are accustomed to regard it? Who shall say with utter confidence? The silence of Josephus permits us to speculate, but gives us no answer to our questionings. It may be even that some items of what the Jewish writer tells us of other leaders of sects and claimants to Messiahship may have been conflated and transformed later on by our Gospel writers or their immediate predecessors, and so used to fill out the story of a life for which they had but little historic data. But this is a delicate and obscure subject of research which requires new treatment.¹

We thus see that, as far as our present enquiry is concerned, we can obtain no positive help from any Pagan or Jewish writer of the first century, or for that matter of the first quarter of the second. It remains to enquire whether from the fragments of extra-canonical gospels or the remains of Old-Christian traditions and from the apocrypha generally we can get any help.

If the general learned opinion on this literature, or at any rate on all of it which in any way makes mention of the Herod or Pilate dates, holds good, namely, that it is later than our Gospels, then we have nothing to help us.

But the recent brilliant study of Conrady² on the "Book of James," commonly called the "Protevangelium" The "Book of James."

¹ See the attempt of Solomon (G.), "The Jesus of History and the Jesus of Tradition Identified" (London; 1880).

² Conrady (L.), "Die Quelle der kanonischen Kindheitsgeschichte Jesus'" (Göttingen; 1900).

(the name given to it by Postel, who first brought it to light in the sixteenth century), the original of which is already admitted by some to reach back as far as the middle of the second century, opens up a question which, if answered in the affirmative, "would mean a complete revolution of our views on the canon and of the origins of Christianity."¹ Conrady believes that he has demonstrated that in some of their details of the history of the infancy our first and third evangelists borrow from a common source, and that this source is no other than our extant "Protevangelium." He would have it that this "Book of James" is of Egyptian origin. The author was not a Jewish Christian, but most probably an Egyptian and an Alexandrian. It is to be hoped that Conrady may follow up his excursion into this field of investigation by other researches of a similar nature; and since he has raised the presumption that we have in the "Protevangelium" one of the "many" Gospel writings referred to in the introduction of the third Gospel, we may glance through the literature,² other than that of the distinct Pilate apocrypha, for a reference to Pilate.

The "Gospel
of Peter."

This we shall find only in the so-called "Gospel of Peter," a considerable fragment of which relating to the passion and death of Jesus was discovered in a tomb at Akhmīm in 1885 and first published in 1892. Much has been written during the last ten years on this interesting

¹ See Nichol's review of Conrady's book in "The Critical Review" (London), January, 1902.

² See Preuschen (E.), "Antilegomena: Die Reste der ausserkanonischen Evangelien und urchristlichen Ueberlieferungen" (Giessen; 1901).

fragment, but the general opinion of scholars is that the writer shows a knowledge of all our four Gospels. If, however, the original of this fragment could be shown to be older than our Gospels (a most difficult undertaking), it would also rank among the "many." Although agreeing substantially with our Gospel accounts, it differs very considerably in its more abundant details from the simple narrative of the "common document," and is strongly Docetic, that is to say, represents Jesus as suffering only in appearance. Its Gnostic character, however, in this respect (for as I have shown elsewhere¹ the origin of Docetism does not depend on purely doctrinal considerations) does not, in my opinion, necessarily point to a late date, though its elaboration of detail seems to argue a later development of tradition as compared with the simplicity of the narrative of the "common document." On the other hand it may be that the "common document" had already begun the process of "selection."

Finally in this connection we may have to pay more attention to the so-called "Gospel of Nicodemus" or "Acts of Pilate," the first thirteen chapters of which describe the trial of Jesus before Pilate, the condemnation, crucifixion and resurrection, substantially in agreement with our canonical Gospels, but containing many other details not found elsewhere. Though the present form of these Acts is not earlier than the fourth century, the question of there being what the Germans call a *Grundschrift* of a comparatively very early date underlying them has recently been raised by Rendel Harris in an exceed-

The "Acts of Pilate."

¹ "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten" (London; 1900), p. 427.

ingly interesting monograph,¹ in which he pleads for a new investigation of the subject, on the ground that he has detected traces of a Homeric Gospel under the Greek text of our "Acta," that is to say a Gospel story patched together out of verses of the great Homeric literature. Among many other points of interest, he thinks he has shown that in the passage where Joseph begs the body of Jesus from Pilate, "that Pilate has been turned into Achilles, that Joseph is the good old Priam, begging the body of Hector, and that the whole story is based upon the dramatic passages of the twenty-fourth book of the Iliad"; and in favour of his hypothesis it must be said that we certainly know from the Sibylline literature that Jewish writers long prior to the first century of our era used Homeric verses for similar purposes.

Professor Harris thus contends that such a Homeric Gospel may have existed prior to Justin Martyr (c. 150), and so this famous apologist, when in his "Dialogue with Trypho" (cc. 102, 103) he twice refers to certain "Acts of Pilate," may be saved from the now generally endorsed imputation that his wish solely was father to his statement. Justin may have had this much ground for his assertion that there was in existence the *Grundschrift* of our "Acta," though of course these "Acta" were by no means the official Roman reports which he seems to have believed them to be.

The subject is a fascinating one, but will not help us much in our present enquiry; for—granting the existence of the underlying document, and also its Homeric

¹ Rendel Harris (J.), "The Homeric Centones and the Acts of Pilate" (London; 1898).

nature, thus accounting for its strange conflation of miracles and events (separately recorded in our canonical Gospels), by the necessity of the vague and general nature of the verse-tags which had to be employed by the Centonist—it argues a later date than our Gospels.¹

It will thus be seen that our review of the earliest external evidence for the date of Jesus, even when we take into consideration the most unusual lines of research, leaves us with nothing so distinct as does the result of the analysis of the tradition of our canonical Gospels. The argument for the authenticity of the Pilate tradition centres round the obscure question of the date of the “common document.” The earlier we can push this back the greater is the probability of the genuineness of the tradition.

We will next turn our attention to the Talmud Jeschu stories, but before doing so it will be advisable to give the general reader some idea of the Talmud itself, and to append some further necessary preliminaries.

¹ It is to be hoped, however, that the new edition of the “Acts of Pilate,” which is being prepared by Dr. Ernst von Dobschütz for the great Berlin collection of early Church documents, will throw some new light on the subject.

IV.—THE GENESIS OF THE TALMUD

The Real Con-
ditioning of
Jewry.

It is perhaps not too much to say that the Talmud has been the chief means whereby the Jews have preserved themselves as a nation ever since the time of the final destruction of their Temple, and the extinction of the last shred of their political independence, until the present day. The Talmud is the chief embodiment of that mysterious power which has kept alive the peculiar spirit of Jewry, and never permitted Israel to forget that it was a people apart.

It is the Talmud which beyond all else has established the norm of life for the Jew; for it is the repository of that multitude of rules of conduct and laws of custom (Halachoth), which the Rabbis, with a bewildering ingenuity (which though intensely serious is frequently a strangely perverse casuistic), deduced from the Law—that Torah, which the Jews, in every fibre of their being, believed had been given by God Himself, who had chosen their fathers from out the nations and for ever bound them to Himself by a special pact and covenant.

But over and beyond this the Talmud is a vast store-house of the strangest mixture of wise saws and witty sayings, of legend and folk-lore and phantasy, parable

and story, homily and allegory, magic and superstition,¹ to be compared to nothing so much as to some seething bazaar of the Orient, where all sorts and conditions of wisdom and folly swarm together and are blended in inextricable confusion.

The most convenient point of departure for a brief excursion into the domain of systematised Talmudic beginnings² is the period from 70 to 200 A.D., which marks the first definite attempts at arrangement (for codification would give the reader a too precise idea of its confused nature) of those rules of custom which constitute the oldest deposit of the existing Talmud in both its forms.

The fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. deprived the Jews of even that comparative political independence which they had previously possessed. It was a terrible blow to the hopes of the nation, especially to all those who looked for a material fulfilment of the many promises in the sacred rolls which bore the names of their ancient prophets—that if they kept the Law, and were true to their covenant with Yahweh, all enemies should be placed in subjection under their feet. And now not only was the Holy City destroyed and the Elect of the earth prostrate before the hated power of idolatrous Rome, but the Holy Temple itself, the chief means, as they then believed, whereby they were to carry out their covenant, was a heap of ruins!

The Psycho-
logical
Moment.

It was indeed a terribly tragic moment even in the history of a people inured to tragedy in the past and

¹ The Haggadic as contrasted with the Halachic element.

² The material itself of the oldest deposit of the Talmud being, of course, of still earlier date.

destined to a future replete with tragic terrors. It is true that even so the spirit of the Zealots¹ was not yet broken; they were yet stubbornly to essay the fortune of arms in Trajan's time in the opening years of the first century, and again in the desperate attempt of Bar Kochba in the closing years of Hadrian's reign (132-135 A.D.). But with the final shattering of their hopes of a material Messianic victory by the crushing defeat of their champion, even the most irreconcilable were forced to abandon the unequal struggle.

The Study of
the Law.

One thing alone remained to save out of the general ruin in Palestine—the treasure of the Law. This desolation, they were convinced, had come upon them because they had not rightly kept their covenant with Yahweh. To the keeping of this bond they would now devote all their remaining strength. The "Study" of the Law should be the means of their future deliverance. From this determination, into which they threw all the perseverance of their stubborn nature, there resulted a marvellous enthusiasm for collecting and preserving the traditions of their predecessors concerning the Law, and of still further developing an infinity of rules of conduct and laws of custom to meet all the diverse changes and chances of Jewish life.

By the end of the second century what were at that time held to be the more authoritative early traditions emerged in a final definitely fixed form—the Mishna.

¹ They were, so to speak, the national fanatics who appealed to the arbitrament of arms, to Yahweh as God of Battles, and by no means a "philosophical sect," as Josephus would have it, except in so far as religion and politics were one for them. See Bousset (W.), "Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter" (Berlin, 1903), pp. 187, 188.

This was the nucleus of our present Talmud, the skeleton, so to say, round which the industry of the next three centuries built up the study of the Law into its full development by completing the Mishna with the Gemārā.

And indeed it seems almost as though it required ^{The Need of} that something of this kind should have been done if ^{it.} the Jews were to be preserved to play the important part they have played, and doubtless have still to play, in Western history. For had it not been for the eager zeal for this Study displayed by the Palestinian Rabbis of the first two centuries of our era, it is very probable that the Jews would have been entirely absorbed in the nations. It was a period when in Babylonia the descendants of the Jews who had contentedly remained behind at the time of the Return (and they in those days constituted the majority of the nation), had almost entirely forgotten the Law and its traditions; from what we can make out of the dim historical indications, they seem to have been almost utterly ignorant of that for which they subsequently became so famous. In Egypt, again, where very large numbers of the Hebrews were permanently settled, Greek culture and Alexandrian mysticism had gradually weakened the old exclusiveness; philosophy and cosmopolitanism had greatly sapped the strength of pure legalism and narrow materialism, and the crude objectivity of ancient legend and myth had long been allegorised into subtler forms more suited to immediate intellectual and spiritual needs. The same factors were doubtless at work elsewhere in the Diaspora or Dispersion of Israel, while even in Palestine itself the influence of the

numerous communities and associations who looked to a more universal view of things had been so strengthened by the crushing disaster which had befallen the nation, that the forces of rigid conservatism were being weakened in every direction, and the ideas of an Israel of God to be formed out of the Righteous of the world, irrespective of race, seemed to threaten the very existence of Jewry as a nation apart.

The Fathers
of Orthodoxy.

Indeed I am by no means certain that there was any widespread orthodoxy in Jewry prior to the days of Mishnaic Rabbinism ; these Rabbis seem to me to have played for Judaism the same part that the Church Fathers played for "Nicene" Christianity ; they established a canon and an orthodoxy. Prior to this there was an exceeding great liberty of belief ; many even rejected the Temple-cultus, at any rate as far as the sacrifices were concerned ; there was no general canon of scripture, saving the Pentateuch, and even this, as we shall see later on, was called into question by many ; not only so, but even the Temple at Jerusalem was not then regarded as the only place where the national cultus could be practised, for in Egypt in the vicinity of the traditional land of Goshen, the Jews had a temple wherein they worshipped Yahweh for more than two hundred years (*circa* B.C. 160—A.D. 71).¹

As the Talmudic Rabbis created an orthodoxy by developing the Pharisaic traditions, so did their contemporaries, the Massoretic Textualists, stereotype the text of the Torah. At first the Greek translation of the Jews in Egypt had been regarded as equally inspired

¹ Ginsburg (C. D.), "Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible" (London ; 1897), pp. 404, 405.

with the original on which it was based; but in Mishnaic days, after the rise of Christianity which adopted this translation as its scripture, the day on which the Septuagint translation was made was regarded by the Rabbis as a day of mourning. The Massorah tradition of the text differs widely from the Samaritan and from the original on which the version of the so-called Seventy was made from the third century B.C. onwards, as may be seen from Ginsburg's monumental work. From all sides, then, we have proof that what we call Judaism to-day was not necessarily what Judaism was in the first century before our era, or even in the first century of our era.

Indeed it seems most highly probable that the strongest factor which helped to intensify Talmudic, that is to say "orthodoxising," activity was the rapid spread of general Christianity, on its emergence from an embryonic stage in which it was hidden in the womb of communities of a somewhat similar nature to those of the Therapeuts. More than ever was it necessary to put a fence round the Torah, that the Law should be preserved by Jews, as Jews, for Jews, when, by means of the ceaseless propaganda of Christianity of all shades, the Gentiles seemed to be robbing the Hebrews of their birthright—of their Law and their Prophets and their Holy Writ. The main claims of the Christians on behalf of their Founder, so argued the Rabbis, were based on mistranslation and misinterpretation of the sacred scriptures of their race. More than ever was it necessary to preserve these writings in their original tongue and purity, and to strengthen the tradition of the authoritative interpretation of their fathers. So

The Great
Heresy.

thought the Rabbis, and unweariedly they laboured to make strong their special tradition and develop it.

The Evolution
of Tradition.

It is to this period that we owe the formulation of many vague, floating opinions and dim reminiscences into distinct and rigid formularies, and the selection out of many contradictory traditions of a view that should constitute "*the tradition*." Nay, sometimes the bitterness of controversy brought to birth "traditions" which had had no previous existence. Just as the industry and high literary ability of the Sopherim, from the time of Ezra (about 440-400 B.C.¹) to the days of the apocalyptic scribe or scribes of Daniel (about 164 B.C.), and even later, gradually evolved out of originally very scanty materials a grandiose tradition of pre-exilic greatness, priestly legalism, sonorous prophecy, and splendid hymnody,² so did the Rabbis of the first Talmudic period, 70-200 A.D., the Tanaim, legalise the tradition evolved by their immediate predecessors,—that all these gradually developed scriptures were not only written throughout by those archaic worthies whose names they bear, and immediately inspired by the Holy Spirit, but that Yahweh himself had given to Moses the five books of the Torah proper written by His own hand. It is on this fundamental presupposition that the whole of the Halachic development of the Talmud is based. These norms of conduct and laws of custom are founded on the Torah, expanded to include all three divisions of the "Books" or "Holy Books,"

¹ The traditional date of Ezra's "promulgation" of the Law is 444, but as late as 397 has been argued for.

² For the latest remarks on the development of Scribism see Bousset, *op. cit.*, pp. 139. "Die Theologen."

Law, Prophets, and Hagiographa (or Holy Writings),¹ as upon infallible revelation from Deity Himself, extending to every word and letter.

In brief, the Rabbis would have it that the canon of the Old Covenant revelation ceased with Ezra, whereas modern scientific research has shown that in the highest probability it only began with that famous scribe. For the Rabbis of Palestine and Babylonia,² then, there was no prophet after Malachi; prophecy and direct inspiration had ceased with Ezra; from that time they would admit no addition to the Law, they acknowledged the authority of no subsequent prophet and of no subsequent scripture. It was for them a question only of the correct tradition of interpretation, and logical development of what had been once for all infallibly laid down. They were to vindicate the authority of the schoolmen and legalists against the claims of subsequent prophecy and apocalyptic of all kinds, and to do so they could find authority for their authority solely in the "Oral Law."

An exceedingly interesting glimpse behind the scenes of scripture industry, before it was stereotyped by the enactments of Talmudic Rabbinism, is afforded by a study of "The Book of Jubilees," which was included in the Alexandrian canon. This interesting expansion of Genesis was written about 135-105 B.C.³ We have therefore before us a document which by a slight

A Glimpse
behind the
Scenes.

¹ Torah, Nebiim, Ketubim.

² The Jews of Alexandria had a far more extended canon.

³ See Charles (R. H.), "The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis" (London; 1902). The traditional Christian title Little Genesis is a misnomer, as Jubilees is far more voluminous than canonical Genesis; it should rather be called the "Detailed Genesis."

divergence of the wheel of fate might have been included in the Bible, for when we see such a book as Chronicles (a Haggadic tendency writing of the second century B.C., which wrote up Kings and Samuel in the interests of later priestly views) included in the canon, and observe that Jubilees treats the matter of Genesis and Exodus in precisely the same fashion, in the interests of a still later and more developed priestly view than that of the Chronicles' redactor in revising Kings and Samuel, we see the making of scripture in the workshop and the continuation of the industry by the fellowship of the same writing guild, attended by very great success, and only just failing to obtain a place in the Palestinian canon.

The Evidence
of the Book
of Jubilees.

The Jubilees' writer was thoroughly ashamed of many of the crudities of the Ezra redaction of Genesis and Exodus, and rewrote the whole matter to suit the views of his own day and circle; Jewish enthusiasm was on top of the wave in the palmy days of Maccabæan conquest, and the ambition of the priestly fanatics was boundless. The whole spirit of the writer is further characterised by a detestation of all non-Jews which fully justifies the strictures of the classical writers of the first century, and throws a flood of light on the nature of subsequent Zealotism, and the mania of exclusiveness that tickled the vanity of Israel and diabolised the gods of all other nations. Exceedingly interesting also is the document for students of later Talmudic developments, for it presents us with earlier (and that, too, written) forms of Haggada and Halacha which the Rabbis of Mishnaic times were compelled to modify. An acquaintance with the literature of this

period also shows us how erroneous is the general Jewish persuasion of later days that the "Oral Tradition" had been handed down unchanged. Of great importance also are the readings of the Bible texts which often approximate more closely to those preserved in the Septuagint translation of the Pentateuch (*c.* 250–200 B.C.) than those of the far later Massorah of the fourth or fifth century.

The Rabbis would have it finally that this Oral Law had always existed side by side with the Written Law ever since the days of Moses onwards. In the first chapter of the Mishna tractate "Aboth," or "Pirke Aboth," containing the "Sayings of the Fathers," we are given what purports to be an unbroken succession of individuals, from Moses to the destruction of Jerusalem, who are said to have been the depositories of this Oral Law. The succession runs as follows: Moses; Joshua; the Elders; the Prophets; the Men of the Great Assembly (from Ezra's time to about 200 B.C.); the famous "Five Pairs," as they were called, the last of which were Hillel (about 70 B.C. to 10 A.D.) and Shammai; and finally, Gamaliel and his son Simon.

The Oral
Law and its
Heredity.

Such is the account given in the Mishna of the heredity of its tradition, and it is not surprising that if scientific research not only questions, but actually reverses, the judgment of the Mishnaic Rabbis with regard to the development of the Written Law, for it practically begins where they would have it cease, that modern scholars should hesitate to accept their account of the Oral Law without question.

Even the most inattentive reader must be struck

with the vague and fragmentary nature of the line of descent. Evidently little was known of the past; even the history of the great literary activity from the fourth to the second century B.C., which had practically given them their Written Torah in the form in which it lay before them, was utterly forgotten. The "Men of the Great Assembly," who are made so much of in the Talmud as the immediate depositories of the Oral Law from the Prophets, are nameless. The Rabbis evidently knew nothing of a historical nature concerning them; nay, of the succeeding period they can only produce the names of teachers to whom tradition ascribed certain sayings, but of whose life and labours we can glean but the scantiest information, while of their literary activity we hear not a word.

Objections to
the Traditional
View.

Accordingly, the very existence of the "Men of the Great Assembly" has been questioned by modern research, and it has been conjectured with great probability, that the historical germ of the traditional idea is to be traced to the general assembly of the people who were called together to accept that Law which had been rewritten by Ezra after the Return (Neh. viii.-x.). "In course of time, instead of an assembly of people receiving the law, a college of individuals transmitting the law was conceived of, and this notion seems to fill up the gap between the latest prophets and those scribes to whom the memory of subsequent times still extended."¹

Whatever else is obscure it is clear that the Palestinian Rabbis of the Tanaite period, or first

¹ Schürer (E.), "A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ" (Eng. trans., London; 1893), Div. ii., vol. i. p. 355.

Talmudic age, were busily engaged in establishing a rigid "orthodoxy" for Judaism, and making it strong against manifold "heresies."¹ The history of the past fine literary activity of the nation which had produced not only the great monuments of scripture we still possess in the Old Testament documents, but much else, was utterly forgotten. And if documents, some of which we now know were written as late as the Maccabæan period, could be ascribed with every confidence to a David or a Daniel, we are justified in assuming that the authority given for the Oral Tradition was, for the most part, of a similarly unhistoric nature. No doubt the heredity of the methods employed by the Tanaim could be traced with very great probability as far back as the earliest of the "Five Pairs," somewhere approaching the beginning of the second century B.C.; but the striking fact that the greatest industry could only discover the names of two teachers for each generation, seems to indicate either that no others were known, or that many names and tendencies had had to be eliminated in seeking the paternity of that special tendency which the Tanaim erected into the test of orthodox Jewry. As to the Oral Law being contemporaneous with Moses, we must place this fond belief in the same category with the still more startling claim of later Kabbalism, that *its* Tradition was first delivered by God Himself to Adam in Paradise.

Again, the fact that the appeal for authority was to

¹ See Weinstein (N. J.), "Zur Genesis der Agada" (Göttingen; 1901), "Die Minim," pp. 91-156, and "Kampf des Patriarchats gegen das Eindringen polytheistischer Ideen in die Gelehrten-Kreise des palästinischen Judenthums," pp. 157-252.

The Tradition
of the "Eso-
tericists."

an oral and not to a written source, is at first sight strange when we remember that there were thousands of books in existence, some of them claiming the authority even of an Enoch or an Adam. Thus the writer of "IV. Esdras," which in every probability was composed under Domitian (85-96 A.D.), tells us (xiv. 18 ff.) "that Ezra prays to God to grant him his Holy Spirit that he may again write out the books . . . which had been burnt (with the temple, one understands). God bids him take to himself five companions, and in forty days and nights he dictates to them ninety-four books, of which seventy are esoteric writings, and the remaining twenty-four are the canon of the Old Testament."¹ It is moreover to be noticed that the numbers differ greatly in various forms of the text; thus we have eighty-four instead of ninety-four, but also 204, 904, and 974. But whatever may have been the number in the original text, this much we learn, that there existed at the end of the first century A.D. a very different view from that so strongly insisted on by the builders of the Talmud—namely, that there was a very extensive written tradition not only contemporaneous with the Torah, but of equal inspiration with it, nay, of so precious a nature that it was kept apart and guarded from public circulation.

The adherents of this view, who, we know from the indications of the many mystic communications of the time and also of preceding centuries, were very numerous, seem, it is true, to have been as ignorant of the actual history of the development of the twenty-four

¹ K. Budde's art., "The Canon," § 17, in the "Encyclopædia Biblica."

(or twenty-two) books of the Torah as were the Tanaim, and this is strange, seeing that it is in the greatest probability to their predecessors that we must assign the writing-in of the more spiritual elements into the Torah itself. It was these esotericists and their communities who were in intimate contact with that ever-widening and spiritualising tendency which we can trace in Essenism, Therapeutism, Philonism, Hermeticism, and Gnosticism; and it is their writings which as strongly influenced the development of Christianity as did the twenty-four books of the Torah.

Doubtless all of these schools and associations had oral as well as written traditions, but their main interest was vision and apocalyptic. They devoted themselves to the culture of prophecy and the practice of contemplation, and their whole energy was centred on the unfolding of those mysteries of the inner life which gave them a certainty of heavenly things. Whereas the chief concern of the Tanaim was the separation of the national life from contact with all "foreign" religious influences by the ever more and more stringent insistence upon that peculiar legalism which the others had found, or were finding, more and more irksome, or had entirely cast off for a more liberal spiritual interpretation, suited to the needs of those who were gathered round the cradle of the infant Proteus that was destined to develop eventually into a new world-faith.

It seems somewhat a sign of weakness that in the midst of so much that was written conservatism had to rely entirely on an oral tradition for its authority. Be that, however, as it may, the lack of written authority

Mysticism
and Orthodoxy.

The Writing
of the Oral
Tradition.

for establishing the Mishnaic legalism as the orthodoxy of Israel seems gradually to have evolved a virtue out of necessity, and we find it repeatedly laid down in the Talmud that the tradition must on no account be written down but solely committed to memory. Indeed later times would have it that not only was the Mishna never written down even when it had reached its final form about 200 A.D., but that the whole voluminous contents of the Talmud Completion, or *Gemārā*, were never committed to writing until the time of the Saboraim¹ (500–650 A.D.), the schoolmen who followed the Amoraim or those who wove the *Gemārā* on to the Mishna.

But in spite of what we know of the prodigious memorising faculty of orientals,² and in spite of the fascinating stories told of the marvellous feats of memory of the Talmud scholars, while we might be tempted to accept the oral tradition of the far less voluminous and comparatively less complex Mishna text, the enormous mass and utterly confused and chaotic nature of the contents of the *Gemārā* make it very difficult to believe that it was handed on solely by verbal repetition. Indeed, it seems far more probable that the Mishna was fully committed to writing at the time of its final redaction about 200–207 A.D.; for when we hear of its completion at this date, it is difficult to understand how an authoritative form of codification of such heterogenous material could have been arrived at by

¹ See Strack (H. L.), "Einleitung in den Thalmud" (Leipzig; 1900, 3rd ed.), p. 55.

² Even Western scholars have declared that the oral tradition of a Vaidic text, for instance, is to be preferred to a written copy.

the exercise of the memory alone; and if this be true of the Mishna, much more must it hold good for the far more voluminous matter of the Gemārā.

With regard to the Halachic contents of the Mishna, it may, of course, have been that the tradition of the precedents on which the lawyers based their decisions had been kept private as the hereditary possession of a special profession; but surely some brief written notes had existed, perhaps also private collections of notes been made, even prior not only to the time of an Akiba in the beginning of the second century, but even of a Gamaliel in the days of Paul.¹

Are we to believe that a Joshua ben Perachia and a Nithai, a Judah ben Tabbai and a Simon ben Shetach, a Shemaiah and an Abtalion, a Hillel and a Shammai, a Gamaliel and an Akiba, left nothing in writing?² They surely must have done so. And if this holds good with regard to the tradition of the most authoritative Halachoth, much more is it likely to have been the case with that huge mass of Haggadic legend and homily, and flotsam and jetsam of like nature, with which the Talmud is filled. Indeed, a scientific review of all the Talmud passages germane to the question, reveals a most confused state of mind on the subject, even among the many makers of that stupendous patchwork themselves. While on the one hand we find it most stringently forbidden to write down Halach-

¹ At the final redaction of Rabbi Judah's Mishna there existed already a number of previous Mishnas (*e.g.*, of R. Akiba, of R. Nathan, of R. Meir). It is said even that there are traces in the Talmud of Mishnas attributed to Hillel and other early Tanaim.

² See Block (J. S.), "Einblicke in die Geschichte der Entstehung der talmudischen Literatur" (Wien; 1884), pp. 2 ff.

oth, we come across isolated references to older written Halachoth; and though the writing of Haggad-oth as well is apparently included in the general prohibition, we meet with very precise references to Haggada books and even collections of such books.¹

In fact, while the North-French Rabbis of the Middle Ages held that the Talmud was never committed to writing till after its final completion at the end of the fifth century A.D., the Spanish Rabbis maintained that the Mishna was written down by Rabbi Jehuda (136-217 A.D.), the Palestinian Gemārā by Rabbi Jochanan (199-279),² and the Babylonian Gemārā by Rab Aschi (375-427) and Rab Abina (head of the Sura School 473-499). This difference of opinion was probably owing to the fact that the French Rabbis had to depend almost entirely on their memories, owing to the burning of their MSS. by the Inquisition, while the Spanish Rabbis of an earlier date were still in enjoyment of their literary liberty.

The Main
Interest of the
Talmud for
Christians.

But whatever may have been the precise mode of the genesis, development and transmission of the text until it reached its full growth in the form which now lies before us, and however difficult it may be to sift out reliable historical data from the dim and confused indications of its contradictory assertions, the tractates of the Talmud remain like the mounds of some great buried city of the past to challenge the industry and ingenuity of the courageous explorer to ever fresh

¹ See Block's "Einblicke," pp. viii, ix; and Strack's "Einleitung," § 2, "Das 'Verbot des Schreibens,'" pp. 49-55.

² And this in face of the fact that many of the authorities cited in the Palestinian Gemārā lived after R. Jochanan, some even a century later.

exertions, in the hope of laying bare traces from which the outlines of some of the ancient buildings may be reconstructed.

And to none can the Talmud be of greater interest than to the student of Christian origins. We will not go so far as to say with Reuchlin that the Talmud (or even the Mishna) is a book "written by Christ's nearest relations," but it is ungainsayable, as has so often been pointed out before, that every purely ethical precept in the Gospels can be paralleled in the Talmud by sayings ascribed to the ancient Rabbis of Israel.

In the Talmud we have a strong stream of tradition which generation by generation, we might almost say year by year, runs parallel with the primitive streamlet which so rapidly widens out into the river, and finally into the flood of Christianity. Here, if anywhere, should we expect to find reliable information as to how what subsequently became the great religion of the West arose, who was its founder, what the matter and method of the teaching, and who were the earliest followers of the teacher.

But before we discuss the passages which are said to refer to Jesus, we must give some rough idea of the history of the written Talmud, and show how these passages were gradually singled out to form the ground of bitterest controversy and persecution.

V.—THE TALMUD IN HISTORY

Justinian's
Novella.

"FROM Justinian, who, as early as 553 A.D., honoured it by a special interdictory Novella, down to Clement VIII., and later—a space of over a thousand years—both the secular and the spiritual powers, kings and emperors, popes and anti-popes, vied with each other in hurling anathemas and bulls and edicts of wholesale confiscation and conflagration against this luckless book."

So writes Immanuel Deutsch, and truly, in his graphic and romantic panegyric, which for the first time gave the English-reading public a reasonable account of the Talmud and its history.¹

Although it has been lately disputed² whether it is the Talmud expressly to which Justinian referred in his edict "Concerning the Jews," of February 13, 553, it seems highly probable that Deutsch is correct. By this outrageous Novella the wretched Hebrews were

¹ Deutsch (I.), art. "What is the Talmud?"—in "The Quarterly Review" (London), Oct. 1867, pp. 417-464.

² Popper (W.), "The Censorship of Hebrew Books" (New York; 1899), p. 3. This is the best monograph which has so far appeared on the subject of Talmud persecutions and censorship. An excellent bibliography of the literature is given on pp. iv. and v.

permitted to use only a Greek or Latin translation of the Torah in their synagogues. They were strictly forbidden to read the Law in Hebrew, and, above all things, they were prohibited from using what is called the "second edition" (*secunda editio*), which was evidently also written in Hebrew or Aramic. This "second edition" can hardly mean anything else than the Mishna and its completions, for the Greek equivalent of *mishna* was *δευτέρωσις*, generally taken by those imperfectly acquainted with Hebrew to signify some "second rank" or form of the Law, instead of "learning" in the secondary sense of "repetition."

Such impolitic tyranny in those darkest days of narrowest ecclesiasticism, which had succeeded in closing every school of philosophy and learning in the Christian world, could not but make the Talmud all the more dear to the Jews. The more they were persecuted for their faith's sake, the more desperately they clung to the immediate cause of their martyrdom—that tradition in which no Christian had part or lot. The Talmud thus gradually became more precious to the Jew than even the Torah itself, which, by translation, had become the common property of the Gentiles, few of whom at this time in the West could read a word of the ancient Hebrew original.

Thus ignorance bred fear and fostered hate, and The Crusades.
already, by the eleventh century, we find the passions of a fierce fanaticism let loose against the luckless Hebrews, when the Crusaders, in their wild rush towards Constantinople, left behind them a path of desolation for the Dispersion of Israel in every land they traversed, marked out by blood and fire, by the

bodies of murdered little ones and smouldering piles of Hebrew rolls. It is said that, after this avalanche of ruthless destruction, in many towns scarce a single prayer-book remained for the use of a whole synagogue. There is another side to the romance of the Crusades, of which our school-books breathe no word; not infrequently they degenerated into pure Jew-hunts, where hecatombs of Hebrews paid ever anew the ancient debt of one slain Christ, whose ever-living heart, we may well believe, felt keener torture at the savagery of His self-styled followers than did even the bodies of the victims of their hate.

The Inquisition.

But it was not till the thirteenth century, which witnessed the founding of the Mendicant Orders, and the establishment of that instrument of terror known as the Holy Inquisition, that we meet with what may be called the organised official destruction of Hebrew books, and the saddest part of the sad story is that in almost every instance it was a Jew who brought matters to a crisis, and procured the deliverance of the books of his race to the flames.

The first official burning of Hebrew books took place in 1233, at Montpellier, where a Jew, a fanatical Antimaimonist, persuaded the Dominicans and Franciscans of the Inquisition, who knew nothing of this purely internal struggle between conservatism and liberalism in Jewry, to commit to the flames all the works of the great Maimonides.

In the same year, at Paris, no less than 12,000 volumes of the Talmud were burned. Converts gave information to those who could not read a single line of the great literature which they so madly longed to

extirpate, and eagerly pointed out the hiding places where the precious rolls of their former co-religionists were stored away.

In 1236, Donin, of Rochelle, in France, a convert baptised under the name of Nicolas, laid thirty-five formal charges against the Talmud before Pope Gregory IX.¹; the chief of which was that in many passages it used blasphemous language in speaking of Jesus and Mary. A few years later (May or June, 1239), Gregory issued a stringent decree to all rulers, temporal and spiritual, in France, England, Castile, Aragon and Portugal, commanding them to seize every copy of the Talmud upon which they could lay hands. Whereupon in France a formal trial was held before a commission consisting of two Bishops and a Dominican, not one of whom knew a single word of Hebrew, and the Talmud was incontinently condemned to the flames. The Jews, however, appealed against this cruel decree with such energy that the carrying out of the sentence was postponed, and a new trial ordered, at which Nicolas himself was the accuser, while four French Rabbis undertook the defence, led by R. Jehiel of Paris.

The Paris
Trial.

"After seeking to invalidate most of the charges, the Rabbis turned to the most important point, and acknowledged that the Talmud contained slighting references to a certain Jesus. But, by taking into account the dates mentioned in the Talmud, and other

¹ He is said to have done so in revenge for having been excommunicated by the French Rabbis because of the doubts he had expressed concerning the validity of the Talmudic tradition. See art. "Apostasy and Apostates from Judaism" in the "Jewish Encyclopædia," on which I have drawn for some of the following details.

evidence furnished by the early Church Fathers themselves they attempted to show that another Jesus, who, had lived at some time earlier than Jesus of Nazareth was the subject of these notices.”¹

It is hardly necessary to add, however, that the unfortunate Rabbis failed to convince the commission. The Talmud was again formally condemned. No less than twenty waggon-loads of MSS. were collected in Paris, and on June 17, 1244, a huge *auto-da-fé* of some 17,000 or 18,000 volumes lit up a conflagration, the insatiable flames of which spread rapidly to every Jewish home throughout the Holy Roman Empire and devoured that treasure of tradition which the Rabbis held dearer than their lives.

Persecution
in Spain.

With the condemnation of the Talmud all the rest of Hebrew literature was practically involved. Thus in 1263 we find another convert, baptised under the name of Paul Christian (Pablo Christiani or Fra Paolo, of Montpellier), inducing the Pope, Clement IV., to issue an order that all Hebrew MSS. of every kind in Aragon should be collected for examination, and if they were found to contain any passages obnoxious to Christians, they should be destroyed or strictly expurgated; while in 1266, also at Barcelona, we meet with a commission assembled for the same purpose.

In England.

In England, however, the Talmud was apparently not burnt, for a simpler means of suppressing it was found in the wholesale expulsion of the Jews, a method

¹ Popper, *op. cit.*, p. 10. But this apology can be as little sustained as can the evasion of Wülfer, Lippmann and Isaac Abarbanel, that the Jesus of the Talmud and the Jesus of the Toldoth were different persons. See Krauss, “Das Leben Jesu” (Berlin ; 1902), pp. 8, 9, 273, n. 4.

resorted to in other countries as well. Nevertheless, we find Honorius IV., in 1286, writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury, warning him against that "damnable book," and strictly admonishing him that he should allow no one to read it (meaning doubtless that no Jew should be permitted to read it, for the Christians, in consequence of their ignorance of Hebrew, could not)—for in the Pope's opinion "all evils flow from it," a phrase which suggests that the influence of the Talmud teachings and traditions was not confined to Jewry.

In the midst of all this hurly-burly of anathema one Pope alone, Clement V., showed some signs of common-sense. Before condemning the Talmud on sight, Clement desired to know something about it, and in 1307 proposed that chairs should be founded for the study of Hebrew, Chaldee and Arabic in the Universities of Paris, Salamanca, Bologna and Oxford. But this liberal proposal came to nothing, and though we are told that somewhat of a lull succeeded to the most acute stage of Talmud persecution from 1232 to 1322, it was owing probably to the great secrecy to which the Jews were compelled to resort in multiplying and transmitting the remnants of their literature from generation to generation, rather than to any greater toleration on the part of the authorities.

One Sensible
Pope.

In Spain, indeed, things were still at fever heat, where Solomon Levi of Burgos, who was formerly a Rabbi and pillar of Jewish orthodoxy familiar with the great Talmudists of the age, but who became a Christian under the name of Paul de Santa Maria, and quickly rose to the position of Archbishop of Carthagena, devoted his great talent and learning to overthrow

Spanish
Apostates.

Judaism. His disciple, Joshua ben Joseph ibn Vives of Lorca, who also became a Christian under the name of Geronimo de Santa Fé, accused the Talmud of teaching blasphemy and of every hostility against the Christians, after he had unsuccessfully conducted a debate concerning the Messianity of Jesus for no less than twenty-two months with some of the learned Rabbis of Aragon (1413-1414). He is known to the Jews as "The Blasphemer."

Even the
Prayers of
the Jews fall
under the
Ban.

Even the prayer-books of the Hebrews could not escape. Already in 1336 Abner of Burgos (Alfonso Burgensis), a Talmudic scholar, philosopher and physician, who is said to have turned Christian, "to become a sacristan of a wealthy church of Valladolid," wrote bitter attacks against his former co-religionists, declaring that one of their daily prayers, "Birkat ha-Minim," was directed against the Christians; whereupon Alfonso XI. issued an edict forbidding them to recite this prayer.

We find subsequently that even the simplest Hebrew prayers could not escape the subtle refinements of accusation brought against them by inquisitorial informers. Thus we learn that in Germany a certain Pessach, who on conversion took the name of Peter in 1399, declared that the Jewish prayer-books ¹ secretly contained attacks on Christianity. The following is a curious instance of this rage of accusation.

In one of the most famous and apparently the most innocent prayers of the nation ("Alenu"), which extols the omnipotence of God on earth, there is a passage which

¹ Dalman gives the original text of sixteen subsequently expurgated prayers from the Liturgy of the Synagogue.

runs: "He hath not made our portion like theirs nor our lot like that of all their multitudes. For they worship and bow down before idols *and vanities*." The words "and vanities" stand in unpointed Hebrew W R K; by one of the well-known methods of kabalistic computation the sum of these number-letters = 316, precisely the same as the sum of the letters J Sh U or Jeschu, the Talmudic form of Jesus!

Pessach would thus have it that even the most innocent-looking prayers of Jewry contained attacks on Christianity, and it is in truth marvellous that in the face of such bitter and relentless persecution a scrap of Jewish writing remained. Indeed, had it not been for the inexhaustible sources of replenishment in the East, and the wonderful memory of the Rabbis, the triumph of the Destroyer would have been complete and the Talmud wiped from off the face of the earth by the Inquisition.

With the age of the Renaissance, however, and the enormous impetus given to liberal studies by the invention of printing,¹ some respite was given to the long-suffering Talmud, but by no means as yet was liberty assured; for though the unfortunate Jews had no longer to fear the wholesale destruction of their books in all countries, they were still subjected to the galling tyranny of the official censor.

Indeed, even in this age of comparative enlightenment the bitterest foes of the Talmud still lived in hopes of reviving the old campaign of extermination with all its terrors, and it is sad to record that the history of nearly

¹ The first Hebrew book printed was probably a commentary of Rashi on the Torah (February 17th, 1475).

"A History of Apostates,"

all the troubles of the second stage of persecution is still almost entirely "a history of apostates."¹

Not to speak of the bitter enmity of Victor von Karhen,² a German Jew who became a Dominican in the early part of the sixteenth century, the most notorious name is that of Joseph (baptised as Johann) Pfefferkorn of Moravia, a name despised above all others by the Jews even in the present day.³ Pfefferkorn also joined the Dominicans, and in 1507 published his first attack in a fierce tract, "Der Judenspiegel," an onslaught which was intended to culminate in one fatal blow to Judaism, namely the confiscation of all Talmudic writings. And indeed Pfefferkorn at first succeeded beyond all expectation, for the immediate result of his agitation was to induce the Emperor Maximilian to revive the time-honoured decree of confiscation, which was eagerly carried out under Pfefferkorn's supervision, who knew only too well where he could lay hands on the precious books of his former co-religionists. But this time, as Deutsch says, "a conflagration of a very different kind ensued."

Reuchlin. Reuchlin, the distinguished Humanist, the most famous Hebraist and Hellenist of the time, was appointed to sit on the commission. His enlightened mind refused to condemn the Talmud without a most searching enquiry. He accordingly set himself to work in his painstaking fashion to make himself

¹ Popper, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

² So Deutsch ; but Karben in "Jewish Encyclopædia."

³ The "Jewish Encyclopædia" (*art. sup. cit.*) says that he was "a butcher by trade, a man of little learning and of immoral conduct, convicted of burglary and condemned to imprisonment, but released upon payment of a fine."

master of its voluminous contents. The Talmud had at last found an impartial mind among its judges; nay, it had found a courageous defender, for in October 1510, Reuchlin issued his famous answer to Pfefferkorn's onslaught, and boldly declared himself in favour of the book.

Hereupon ensued a fierce battle, in which the massed hosts of official theology and obscurantism were marshalled against the courageous champion of enlightened toleration and elementary justice. Europe was flooded with pamphlets, and faculty vied with faculty in angry condemnation of Reuchlin. Without exception, every university was against him. Indeed the faculty of Mainz, among other egregious notions, put forward the ludicrous proposition, that as the Hebrew Bible did not agree with the Vulgate (Jerome's Latin translation), the Hebrew must manifestly have been falsified in many places by the malevolence of the Jews, and, in particular, the wording of the "original references" to Jesus in the Old Testament had been deliberately altered.

Had Reuchlin stood absolutely alone he would have been overwhelmed by the first onrush of his countless foes; but to their lasting credit there rallied to his banner a chosen band of enlightened and courageous friends, the Humanists, who, though they were dubbed "Talmutphili," declared themselves to be the "Knights of the Holy Ghost," and the "Hosts of Pallas Athene," fighting for the credit of Christianity and not for the Talmud as Talmud.

At first the Pope, Leo X., favoured Reuchlin, but the outcry was so fierce that he finally weakened, and in 1516 sought a way out of the hurly-burly by promulgat-

The Germ of
the Index.

ing a Bull that in future no book should issue from the press without previous submission to the official censor. The germ of the "Index Expurgatorius"—"Index Librorum Prohibitorum"—had been conceived.¹

But before this instrument of emasculation and prohibition could be brought into play, the first complete edition of the Talmud had escaped the censor, and had already been printed at Venice in 1520, at the very time when the knell of much in the old order of things was being sounded in Germany, and Luther was burning the Pope's bull at Wittenberg.

This much, at least, was won by the courage of Reuchlin and those who rallied round him—the Talmud had escaped the fire. Not only so, but many began to study the treasures of Jewish literature for themselves, and in Italy there ensued the greatest industry in printing Hebrew books; indeed, some writers have called this the "Golden Age" of the Talmud. It was a time when the greatest minds among the Humanists were drinking deeply of "Jewish philosophy," the age of revived Kabbalism and mystic culture.

The Talmud
Fires
Relighted.

But it was not to be expected that the fierce spirit of persecution would quietly yield to the gentler influences at work, and be content with censorship alone; nay, these humanising tendencies exasperated it to such a pitch, that in 1550 Cardinal Caraffa, the Inquisitor-General, and—in this connection, one need hardly add—a Dominican, almost succeeded in lighting up the Talmud fires again throughout the land. He procured a Bull from the Pope repealing all previous permission

¹ From that day onwards the Talmud has always been on the Index, and is still on the Index of Leo XIII.

to study the Talmud, and bursting forth with fury at the head of his minions, seized every copy he could find in Rome and committed it to the flames.

In Italy also Sixtus of Sienna, a converted Jew, supported by Pope Paul IV., incited the mob to burn every copy of the Talmud upon which they could lay hands. In Cremona, Vittorio Eliano, also a convert, testified against the Talmud, and 10,000 to 12,000 Hebrew books were burned in 1559. His brother Solomon Romano also procured the burning of many thousands of Hebrew rolls. In the same year every Hebrew book in the city of Prague was confiscated.

But, fortunately, this was the expiring flicker of the The Censor. life of the Destroyer in that form, and in the future we hear of no more burnings. The Talmud was hereafter committed to the tender mercies of an ignorant censorship, and therewith of a deliberate self-censorship, whereby every sentence which might by any means be thought to refer to Christianity was omitted by the Jews themselves, so that their books might escape the sad disfigurement of slap-dash obliteration. There was much expurgation by ignorant heads and careless hands, till gradually lists of passages were drawn up, mostly by converts, to guide the unlearned officials, and finally, in 1578, the "licensed" Basle edition of the Talmud was issued—in conformity with the censorship and the decisions of the egregious Council of Trent—on which nearly every subsequent edition of the book has been based. Not only so, but we find the Rabbis themselves forming their own censorship committees¹ to prevent

¹ In 1631 the Jews held a synod at Petrikau, in Poland, and decided to leave out all such passages for fear of the

any book being printed by their co-religionists which might bring down the wrath of the authorities upon their long-suffering communities. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries thus witnessed the circulation of an emasculated and defaced Hebrew literature, from which not only was the root of offence to Christian susceptibilities cut out, but much that was entirely innocent of any offence whatever.¹ The nature of this ridiculous and hysterical susceptibility to find offence in the simplest words and phrases may be seen from Deutsch's humorous word-picture.

His
Absurdities.

"In the Basle edition of 1578—. . . which has remained the standard edition almost ever since—that amazing creature, the Censor, stepped in. In his anxiety to protect the 'Faith' from all and every danger—for the Talmud was supposed to hide bitter things against Christianity under the most innocent words and phrases—this official did very wonderful things. When he, for example, found some ancient Roman in the book swearing by the Capitol or by Jupiter 'of Rome,' his mind instantly misgave him. Surely this Roman must be a Christian, the Capitol the Vatican, Jupiter the Pope. And forthwith he struck out Rome and substituted any other place he could think of. A favourite spot seems to have been Persia, sometimes it was Aram and Babel. So that this worthy Roman may be found unto this day swearing by the Capitol of Persia or by the Jupiter of Aram and Babel. But wherever the word 'Gentile' occurred, the Censor was seized with the

Christians. Nevertheless, we find that the Amsterdam edition of the Talmud (1644-1648) was not bowdlerised.

¹ See Popper, *op. cit.*, chh. viii.-xii.

most frantic terrors. A 'Gentile' could not possibly be aught but Christian; whether he lived in India or in Athens, in Rome or in Canaan; whether he was a good Gentile—and there are many such in the Talmud—or a wicked one. Instantly he christened him, and christened him as fancy moved him, an 'Egyptian,' an 'Aramæan,' an 'Amalekite,' an 'Arab,' a 'Negro'; sometimes a whole 'people.' We are speaking strictly to the letter. All this is extant in our best editions."

"Deutsch himself was a Jew converted to Christianity when he wrote his famous article in 1867, yet how marvellously does he differ from his predecessors of the Middle Ages, who led the onslaught on the Talmud, and expressly singled out the subsequently expurgated passages for the main strength of their attack! Deutsch passes them by with scarcely a notice, and seems never to have realised that they were the main cause of all the trouble, and we have the new and pleasant spectacle of a converted Jew penning the most brilliant defence of the Talmud which has ever been written outside the circles of orthodox Jewry."

Immanuel
Deutsch.

So I wrote when this chapter appeared as an article in "The Theosophical Review" (Oct. 1902); I had then no doubt on the subject, because of the frequent use of the words "our Lord" throughout this famous defence. What, then, was my surprise to find that an old friend of Deutsch's denied absolutely that he was a convert, and asserted that the editor of the "Quarterly," much to Deutsch's annoyance, had deliberately changed "Jesus" into "our Lord" throughout the article. The "Jewish Chronicle" (Nov. 21, 1902) also pointed out that I was mistaken in describing Deutsch as a convert to

Christianity. Whereupon I wrote to the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Hermann Adler, who courteously replied as follows : " I was very intimate with the late Immanuel Deutsch, and can state unhesitatingly that he was deeply annoyed that in the first edition of the 'Quarterly Review' Jesus was spoken of as 'our Lord.' This was changed in the subsequent seven or eight editions of that number of the 'Quarterly.' It so appears, however, in the republication of the article in the 'Literary Remains of the late Immanuel Deutsch' (Murray ; 1874)."

The self-constituted censor, therefore, had not ceased his activity even in 1867; it is a matter of profound interest to notice how morality in theology hangs behind morality in ordinary affairs, even in our own day.

Crypto-
graphy.

But to the student of history and the watcher of the fates of nations, the proceedings of the ignorant Talmud censor are of profound interest. It would almost seem as though, by a curious turning of the kârmic wheel, the very methods used deliberately by the Jews themselves in the far-off days of Talmud genesis had come back to vex the Jewish soul against its will. How often in those days of bitter religio-political strife had they not substituted Babylon or Edom for Rome, and hidden their real thought and feeling under glyph and imagery ! And now what they had done willingly, and so vexed the soul of history, was being done to them unwillingly by the hands of the dull censor. Who knows what a thorough study of the Talmud from this point of view may not yet reveal of hidden history ? For, as Deutsch says, and in its wider sense it remains true until the present day :

“ We have sought far and near for some special book on the subject, which we might make the theme of our observations—a book that should not merely be a garbled translation of a certain twelfth century ‘ Introduction,’ interspersed with vituperations and supplemented with blunders, but which from the platform of modern culture should pronounce impartially upon a production which, if for no other reason, claims respect through age—a book that would lead us through the stupendous labyrinths of fact, and thought, and fancy, of which the Talmud consists, that would rejoice even, in *hieroglyphical* fairy-lore, in abstruse propositions and syllogisms, that could forgive wild bursts of passion, and not judge harshly and hastily of things, the real meaning of which may have had to be *hidden under the fool’s cap and bells*.”

We have italicised the words which point to a most important element in the Talmud, especially in connection with our present enquiry, an element of concealment, the secrets of which even a text in which all the expurgated passages have been replaced, and the whole critically restored to its original purity, would in nowise reveal to the pure objectivist. This element will doubtless for many a day to come make the Talmud in many passages as puzzling a study as those strange books of alchemy to which Reuchlin so aptly compared it. But in spite of its great difficulty, it cannot but be that with a deeper study of this element, and perhaps some day with the help of those methods of a scientific subjectivism to which we referred in our Introduction, some clear light may at no distant date be thrown, even on some of those passages which the

hate and fear of centuries have singled out as referring to Jesus in the Talmud.

Anti-
Semitism.

Whether or not the present praiseworthy attempt, as set forth in the pages of the "Jewish Encyclopædia," at last to supply the thinking public with a reliable account of the Talmud in its multifarious aspects, will cover the whole ground and boldly face the most difficult of all its problems without fear or prejudice, remains to be seen.

Unknown as this ancient controversy is to the English-speaking world, it is not unknown on the Continent even in our own day. Indeed, in Russia and Austria it still enters into the deplorable Anti-semitic question. Thus we find a Professor of Theology and Lecturer in Hebrew of the Imperial Roman Catholic Academy¹ at St. Petersburg, in a recent work,² raising the whole question again, not in the interests of science and history, but in the interests of theology and Anti-semitic propaganda. In it he brings forward a number of the Jesus passages in the Talmud, and in his concluding words introduces us to a thoroughly mediæval state of affairs. He tells us that all who had heard of the publication of his book told him with one voice that he would be put away by the Jews. Some tried to dissuade him by reminding him of the fate of Professor Chiarini, who died suddenly when he determined on undertaking a translation of the Talmud; others spoke of the monk Didacus of Vilna, a Jewish convert, who was killed, and of others who were persecuted in

¹ This seems a contradiction in terms, but so it stands on Deckert's title-page (*op. sub. cit.*).

² Pranaitis (I. B.), "Christianus in Talmude Judæorum, sive Rabbinicæ Doctrinæ de Christianis Secreta" (St. Petersburg; 1892). No copy of this is in the British Museum.

various ways because they disclosed the secrets of the Jewish religion; not only himself but his relatives would be exposed to danger. But, continues this theological Bombastes, after evoking the phantasms of his own imagination, no consideration for his own personal safety will deter him from his task, and from rushing into the fray between Semites and Anti-semites, who both think they are fighting for the truth; whereas he at last really *knows* what is the truth of the whole matter. He is willing to bear all, even to offer his life for the cause.

This is, of course, pure childishness, but it shows the ingrained mediævalism of the theological nature. If Pranaitis' thesis had remained in its original Latin, it might have soon sunk into oblivion, but it was immediately translated into German by Dr. Joseph Deckert of Vienna,¹ who more than doubled its length by adding notes and comments, crammed with citations from the most recent Anti-semitic literature and the reports of ritual murder trials.² Deckert especially singled out for animadversion a book by a Jewish controversialist Dr. Lippe,³ and we move in a hurly-burly so utterly foreign to the temper of the twentieth century in its dealings with every other subject, that we are almost inclined to think that *Odium Theologicum* is the last enemy which humanity will ever slay.

¹ "Das Christenthum im Talmud der Juden oder die Geheimnisse der rabbinischen Lehre über die Christen" (Vienna; 1894).

² See art., "Blood Accusation," in "Jewish Encyclopædia."

³ Lippe (K.), "Das Evangelium Matthæi vor dem Forum der Bibel und des Talmud" (Jassy; 1889). This also is not in the British Museum; it is a curious work, with, among other things, no less than six pages of misprints in it, and many more not noticed by the author.

VI.—IN THE TALMUD'S OUTER COURT.

The Need of
Preliminaries.

PERHAPS some of my readers will think that I have already devoted too much space to the Talmud and its history, and that it is high time for me to tell them plainly what this chaos of Jewish tradition has to say about Jesus, and so have done with the matter. But when I remember my own erroneous impressions many years ago on first coming across statements (shorn of their context and environment) which confidently affirmed that the Talmud declared categorically that Jesus had lived a century earlier than the date assigned to him by the evangelists, and that instead of his being crucified in Jerusalem he was stoned at Lud, I feel that it is absolutely necessary first of all to give the unlearned reader some rough notion of the genesis and history of our sources of information, and that instead of having to plead excuse for the space I have devoted to preliminaries, I have rather to apologise for the brevity and roughness of the foregoing two chapters and to append some additional introductory indications before the general reader can be furnished with the most elementary equipment for approaching the consideration of the passages themselves with any profit.

Indeed the whole subject bristles with such disheartening difficulties on all sides that I have been

frequently tempted to abandon the task, and have only been sustained by the thought that my sole reason for taking pen in hand was simply to point out some of the more salient difficulties, and to exclude from the outset any expectations of a more ambitious performance. And not only are the difficulties connected with questions of history and of fact disheartening, but the whole subject is, as we have seen, involved in an atmosphere of such a painful nature that one would gladly escape from it and leave the dead to bury their dead. But the past is ever present with the eternal soul, the dead come ever back to life, and there is no rest till we can forgive one another, not when we have temporarily forgotten but while we still remember.

We write not to fan into fresh flame the smouldering fires of ancient hate, but with far fairer hopes. The times have changed, and older souls have come to birth than those who raged so wildly in the Early and the Middle Ages, and there are wiser minds to-day than those unyielding formalists on either side who shut the freer life of greater things out of the synagogues of Jewry and from out the Catholic churches of the Christian Name. For man is man though he be Jew or Christian, mind is mind though it give praise to Yahweh or worship to the Christ, and none but bigots can deny there is growth for every soul in its own way by virtue of its special guide and code of ancient lore. But sure as destiny a day will dawn when every soul will reach to manhood and begin to learn the way of greater things, and once a soul sets foot upon this way passions fall off from it, and it can gaze into the face of history unmoved.

The Manhood
of the Soul.

And many are already fast nearing the birthday of their manhood, for there is little doubt but that the love of impartial investigation, which is ever more strongly characterising every department of learning in our own day, is paving the way towards a new era of thought and comprehension, in which the values assigned by the past to many things will be entirely changed; particulars will no more be throned above universals, nor will the temporal thoughts of men rank higher than the ever-present Thought of God. But from this fair hope of order to return to the puzzling records of a disordered past.

Of the
Talmud in
General.

The Talmud, then, is a vast store-house of Jewish Midrashim collected at various dates between 100–500 A.D. It consists of a generally older deposit called the Mishna and of additional strata known as the Gemārā or completion—to use technical terms for the sake of brevity. And indeed it is almost impossible to translate them correctly,¹ for such words as Talmud, Mishna and Midrash in the first instance signify simply “study” in a general sense, then some special study or some special method of study, and then again the works which have grown out of such general study or special methods. Midrashim are thus in general explanations or amplifications of Biblical topics, and the Talmud is a heterogeneous collection of Midrashim of every kind.

Its Forms
and
Languages.

The result of this Study of the Law has been handed down in two forms and three languages. Both forms contain the same Mishna in Hebrew (the Biblical language of the Rabbis), while the two Gemārās are composed in the unstable Aramaic vernacular of the

¹ See Strack's “Einleitung,” § 2, “Wörterklärungen.”

times, and in two widely differing dialects, the Western or Palestinian and the Eastern or Babylonian, the former of which especially was an odd mixture of Greek, Aramaic, Latin, Syriac, and Hebrew ; it was, so to speak, the "commercial language" of the then East, even as Greek was of the then West. These two forms of the Talmud have for long been commonly known as the Jerusalem and Babylonian (Talmud Yeruschalmi and Talmud Babli); but the former designation is very erroneous, for Jerusalem was never a centre of Talmudic activity, and the epithet Palestinian is to be preferred as more correct even than the oldest known titles of this collection, namely Talmud of the Land of Israel or Talmud of the West.

The Babylonian collection is at least four times the size of the Palestinian, and though the latter may have originally contained more matter than it does in its present form, the difference is mainly owing to the fact that the Rabbis of the West were content to give the opinions of their predecessors without the detailed discussions on which they were supposed to have based their decisions; whereas the Babylonian Talmud frequently has entire folios filled with what the modern mind (unless by chance some new and unexpected light is thrown on the matter) can only consider childish questions and answers, which show nothing else than how the texts of the Torah could be twisted out of all recognition to support later special points of view which the original writers of the verses had clearly never dreamed of.¹

The Talmuds
of Palestine
and
Babylonia.

¹ See Schwab (M.), "Traité des Berakhoth du Talmud de Jérusalem" (Paris ; 1871), Introd., p. lxxvi. This is the opinion of

It is also to be remembered that for the later Jews the Babylonian collection gradually became *The* Talmud, while the Palestinian fell into disuse. In our own days the latter is never taught, but always the former. The Jews of Babylonia, moreover, had more peace and leisure for this strengthening of the defences of the Torah than their Palestinian contemporaries, who were harried by the ever-growing power of Christianized Rome. Even in Babylon this immunity from persecution only continued to the close of the Talmud in 500 ; indeed, its "close" was forced upon it from without by a fierce outbreak of intolerance. Thereafter until our own day the Hebrew found no peace except when under the protection of Islām ; then it was that the learned doctors of Israel played so distinguished a part in the intellectual development of Europe, and displayed the remarkable versatility of genius which their enforced cosmopolitanism developed to a degree that is difficult to parallel in any other nation. But to return to the Talmud, which has kept Jewry as a people apart, in spite of its being scattered throughout the nations, and which has indirectly brought the Orient to the Occident, and settled it in our midst.

Statistics. Some idea of the voluminous nature of the Talmud may be formed when it is stated that the text of the Babylonian collection alone, in the *editio princeps* of 1520, the model which has been mostly followed as far as form is concerned, occupies no less than twelve huge

a distinguished French Rabbi, who has given the world the only complete translation of the Palestinian Talmud which exists, and not of a Philistine.

folio volumes, consisting of 2947 folio leaves and 5894 pages.¹

In both Talmuds the Mishna² is broken up into six Orders or Sections (Sedārim), known as "The Six" *par excellence*, just as the Torah proper was called "The Five" or "The Five Fifths." These orders are again sub-divided into sixty-three tractates or treatises, and these again into 523 chapters or paragraphs.

The Mishna text stands surrounded by the Gemārā text in unpointed Hebrew characters, a mystery often to those initiated into a knowledge of Hebrew. For indeed it is not only the voluminous nature of the material,³ and the wilderness of an unpointed text, which are the only difficulties to be surmounted by the first-hand student of the Talmud, but in addition he has to be an adept in solving the countless puzzles of Rabbinic abbreviations, mnemonic technicalities, and ungrammatical forms, and to be further not only master of three different languages, but equipped with a philological intuition that few even of the most learned in this age of learning can be expected to possess.

It is not then surprising to find that as yet we have no complete translation of the Talmud. We have no

No Complete Translation.

¹ Hershon (P. I.), "A Talmudic Miscellany" (London ; 1880), Intro. (by W. R. Brown), p. xvi.

² It is a mistake to call the Mishna "text" and the Gemārā "commentary," as is so often done, for though in printed form the Mishna stands out in bolder type, surrounded by the Gemārā, the latter is not a commentary but a completion or appendix of additional matter.

³ Even of the canonical Talmud alone, for there is a large number of extra-canonical tractates as well to be taken into account. See Strack's "Einleitung," ch. iv., "Die ausserkanonischen Tractate," pp. 44-46.

Talmudic Vulgate, no Authorised Version, much less a Revised Version. Even in that magnificent pioneer series of world-bibles, "The Sacred Books of the East," though we have versions of most complex Brāhmanical law-books, we fail to find a single tractate of the Talmud translated. And this is to be regretted, not only because the Talmud as a whole is as yet a closed book to the non-specialist, but because a translation into the vernacular would for ever revolutionise the ideas of the ignorant among the Jews, who imagine that the Talmud is a storehouse of wisdom from its first to its last syllable.

The non-specialist, therefore, has to be content with translations of portions only of this library of Jewish tradition, for the most part with versions of single tractates, and even so he has to depend almost solely on work done by Jews or converted Jews, for in the whole list of Talmud tractate translations we are told, the names of only five Christians born are to be found.¹

The General
Ignorance on
the Subject.

What we want is a scientific translation of the Talmud, for, to summarise Bischoff, how few theological students know anything of this great literature, how few Christian scholars have really worked through a single complete tractate! How few Jews even, at any rate of German birth,² have any longer any profound knowledge of the Talmud!

The only real Talmudists³ nowadays are to be

¹ See Bischoff (E.), "Kritische Geschichte der Thalmud Übersetzungen aller Zeiten und Zungen" (Frankfort a. M. ; 1899), p. 85.

² And in England real Talmudic scholars will not exhaust the fingers for their counting.

³ Of the old school, of course, not scientific students of ancient scripture and literature.

found in Russia, Galicia, Hungary, and Bohemia, and even so the work of the younger generation presents us with a picture of complete degeneracy and decline. It is true that in recent years there has been some small activity in Talmud study, partly in the interest of Jewish missions on the side of Christian theologians, partly in the interest either of Anti-semitism on the one hand or of Jewish apologetics on the other, but in no case in the interest of pure scientific enquiry for the furtherance of our knowledge of the history of culture, religion and language. Moreover, owing to the difficulty of original study the non-specialist¹ has to depend entirely on translations, and as we have no immediate expectation of a complete translation of the Babylonian Talmud, and the French translation of the Palestinian Talmud leaves much to be desired, he has to be content with piecing together a patch-work of translation of single tractates, some of which even the best furnished libraries fail to supply.²

And if such difficulties confront the non-specialist who is keenly desirous of learning all he can about the Talmud, and is willing to take an infinity of pains in the matter, the general reader has to be content with such a very distant glimpse of the country as to remain ignorant of all but its most salient features. Moreover, even with regard to the material available the student finds himself severely handicapped, for he can form no just opinion as to its value, and must rely entirely on the opinion of experts to guide him in his choice of the best sources of information. Thus before I came across

Translations
in Progress.

¹ Who, as a rule, has the more open mind.

² Cf. Bischoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 10.

Bischoff's very useful history of existing Talmud translations, I had already acquainted myself with the only complete version of the Palestinian Talmud and the work in progress on the Babylonian Talmud, but could of course form no opinion as to the accuracy and reliability of these translations.

Of the Palestinian Talmud, then, we possess a complete French version by Moïse Schwab ;¹ it is rendered into readable French and is generally clear, but Bischoff tells us² that it is a free translation, and in many passages open to objection.

With regard to the translations of the Babylonian Talmud which are in progress, lovers of accuracy are in a still worse plight. Rodkinson's English version³ puts the mediæval censorship to the blush, proceeding as it does on lines of the most arbitrary bowdlerisation in the interest of apologetic "purification." In his Introduction, most of which is taken directly from Deutsch's famous article, Rodkinson sets forth his scheme as follows :

"Throughout the ages there have been added to the text marginal notes, explanatory words, whole phrases and sentences invented in malice or ignorance by its enemies or by its friends. . . . We have, therefore, carefully punctuated the Hebrew text with modern punctuation marks, and have re-edited it by omitting all such irrelevant matter as interrupted the clear and orderly arrangement of the various arguments.

¹ "Le Talmud de Jérusalem" (Paris ; 1871-1889).

² *Op. cit.*, p. 57.

³ "New Edition of the Babylonian Talmud : English Translation and Original Text, edited, formulated and punctuated," by Michael L. Rodkinson (Cincinnati ; 1896, in progress).

. . . We continue our labours in the full and certain hope that 'he who comes to purify receives divine help'!"¹

In Goldschmidt's German translation² I thought I had at last come across a serious and reliable guide, but Bischoff for ever removes this confidence by telling us that seldom has scientific criticism been so unanimous in its condemnation of not only the untrustworthy nature of Goldschmidt's text, but also of the superabundant errors and the obscure and false German of his translation.³

Even more reprehensible than Rodkinson's pious attempt at edification is the literary jest of a certain Jean de Parly,⁴ who instead of a translation gives us little more than a summary of the arguments of the various tractates. As he says in his Introduction (p. xvi): "What I have suppressed in the translation is, in the first place, all those sterile controversies and discussions given in the original under the form of question and answer, and in the second the biblical verses cited in the text";—in brief he gives us the ghastly corpse of a mutilated and disembowelled Talmud.

Indeed, as we read of the many abortive attempts to make the Talmud in its full contents known to the world, we are almost tempted to believe that any such undertaking lies under a persistent curse. Some have

An Unsatisfactory State of Affairs.

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. xii, xiii.

² "Der babylonische Talmud . . . moeglichst wortgetreu uebersetzt und mit kurzen Erklærungen versehen," von Lazarus Goldschmidt (Berlin ; 1896, in progress).

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁴ "Le Talmud de Babylone, Texte complet . . . accompagné des principaux Commentaires et synthétiquement traduit" par Jean de Parly (Orléans ; 1900).

begun the task, and either abandoned it or died before its accomplishment; others have emasculated the original out of all recognition; all have failed.

We are thus without any really reliable translation of the Talmud as a whole, and the task we have undertaken in this present essay would have been utterly impossible of accomplishment but for the fortunate circumstance, that the text of the very passages we specially desire to study has been recently critically edited and fairly translated; but of this later on. It is only necessary to add here that Bischoff's learned monograph gives a critical bibliography of all existing translations, and that Strack's "classical" "Einleitung," as Bischoff calls it (p. 10), to which we have already referred on several occasions, in its third edition (1900), gives a full bibliography up to date of the general literature of the subject. Strack's Introduction, it is true, gives us only an anatomical study of the Talmud, the articulation of its bare bones alone, but it is, nevertheless, a monument of patient industry and research.

Internal
Difficulties.

So much, then, for a very brief indication of the literature of the subject and the nature of the initial difficulties which confront a student of the Talmud; but these initial difficulties are as nothing to the internal difficulties which perplex the historical investigator. For the most part the only indications of time in the Talmud are that certain things are stated to have been done or said by such and such a Rabbi, and not unfrequently we find that the Rabbi in question could not possibly have said or done the things attributed to him.

Nor will the traditional dates of the completion of

the Mishna and the various redactions of the two Gemārās help us to any general certainty, so that we can say confidently that as such and such a thing is not found in the Mishna it must therefore be later than 200 A.D., or again that as such and such a thing is found only in the Babylonian Gemārā, it evidently must be a late invention, for the first Talmud schools in Babylon were founded only about 200 A.D.¹ There must have been wide overlappings, and part of the Haggadic material of the Palestinian Gemārā must have been in existence long prior to the completion of the Mishna, which concerned itself more especially with Halacha, while the Babylonian schools derived their tradition in the first place immediately from the Palestinian.

In any case since the Talmud itself shows such great contempt for history, or rather let us say since it seems to be utterly deficient in the historical sense, it is incumbent upon us first of all to establish from outside sources the earliest date we can for the existence of hostile Jewish stories concerning Jesus; otherwise it might be argued that the Talmud stories were almost entirely invented by later Babylonian Rabbis, and had no currency in Palestine where the "historical facts" were known.

¹ "The Jews in Babylonia, no doubt, shared in the changes and movements that Ezra and his successors, who came from Babylonia, introduced into Palestine. But for the four centuries covering the period from Ezra to Hillel there are no details; and the history of the succeeding two centuries, from Hillel to Judah I., furnishes only a few scanty items on the state of learning among the Babylonian Jews." See Bacher's art., "Academies in Babylonia," in "Jewish Encyclopædia." Can it possibly be that up to the third century A.D. the "traditions" of the Babylonian Jews did not support the contentions of the Palestinian Rabbis?

VII.—THE EARLIEST EXTERNAL EVIDENCE TO THE TALMUD JESUS STORIES.

The Earliest
Persecution of
the Christians
by the Jews.

CHRISTIAN tradition will have it that already as early as about 30 A.D. the followers of Jesus were most bitterly persecuted by the Jewish authorities. On the other hand, we know that Christians and Jews were undistinguished by the Roman authorities until the closing years of the first century, and that, too, not only in Palestine but also among the Dispersion—a consideration which in the opinion of some critics tends somewhat to weaken the strength of the traditional line of demarcation which is regarded as having been drawn between Jewish and Gentile Christians in the Diaspora by Pauline propaganda. Moreover, we are further assured by Talmud scholars that according to Jewish tradition Jews and Jewish Christians were not distinctly separated out till the reign of Trajan (98–117 A.D.), or even still later in Hadrian's time (117–138 A.D.).

It is impossible to reconcile these contradictory data; for though we may almost entirely eliminate the negative evidence of classical writers by the persuasion that the official Roman was ignorant or careless of the rights or wrongs of the matter, and contemptuously lumped

Jew and Christian together as of the same family as far as their *superstitio* was concerned, the Christian and Jewish traditions appear to be in straitest contradiction, even though we suppose that the Palestinian Rabbis who first evolved the Talmud paid attention only to the state of affairs in the land of Israel proper and were not concerned with the Dispersion. It may indeed be that in the beginning the Rabbis paid no attention to Gentile Christians of any grade in Palestine, but regarded them as Heathen, and the vast majority of them as '*Amme ha-uretz*, entirely outside the pale of Jewry and its privileges; it may be that they were only concerned with born Jews who were abandoning the externals of the Law and introducing into Jewry what the Rabbis considered to be polytheistic views which set at naught the rigid monotheistic commandments of the Torah. But even so, if the testimony of Paul as to himself is genuine, there was the bitterest persecution many years before the Talmud indirectly admits it.

Now in spite of the brilliant critical ability of van Manen and his school, I am still inclined to regard the majority of the Pauline letters as largely genuine, and therefore as being our earliest historical witnesses to Christianity. From these we learn that already upwards of a generation before the fall of Jerusalem, which immensely intensified the propaganda of more liberal and spiritual views throughout the nation, there was bitter persecution on the part of the Jewish authorities against heresy, and that among the victims of this persecution were the followers of Jesus. We do not have to deduce this from enigmatical sentences or

The Testi-
mony of Paul.

confused traditions, but on the contrary we have before us what purports to be not only the testimony of an eye-witness, but the confession of one who had taken a leading part in the persecution. In his Letter to the Galatians (i. 13) Paul declares that before his conversion he was engaged in persecuting and "wasting" the "Church of God." If this declaration of the great propagandist is a statement of fact, and not a rhetorical embellishment, or a generous exaggeration in contrition for previous harshness (begotten of zeal for the "tradition of the fathers") towards those with whom he was now the co-believer, it is in straitest contradiction with the opinion of those Talmudic scholars who assert that Jews and Jewish Christians continued together in comparative harmony till the reign of Trajan.

Of the Acts.

The graphic details of this persecution as given in the Acts, and its far-reaching character, as suggested by the furnishing of Paul by the authorities with letters against the heretics even among the Dispersion at Damascus, may presumably be set down as a later Haggadic expansion, or the ascription of circumstances of a later date to Pauline times.¹ But whatever was the exact nature of the "havoc" in the time of Paul, at the time of the redaction of the Acts (130–150 A.D.) it was still a lively remembrance that there had been much persecution at the hands of the Jews, that is to say most probably from the Mishnaic Rabbis and their adherents—a fact confirmed by the Talmud, which in a number of passages allows us to conclude that during the first

¹ Otherwise we have to account for the existence of a "Church" at Damascus at a date when, according to canonical tradition, the first Church at Jerusalem had hardly been formed.

thirty-five years of the second century the great Akiba himself, who was so zealous for the Law, and the virtual founder of the Talmud method, was the most strenuous and implacable opponent of Christianity. And if there was persecution, there must have previously been controversy, and controversy of the most embittered nature, and if bitter dispute then presumably scandal and slander.

We are certain then that the strife was at fever heat in the first quarter of the second century, just prior to the compilation of our four canonical Gospels; the "common document" (as we saw in a previous chapter) shows further that it was in manifestation some half century prior to the redaction of these documents, say somewhere about 75 A.D., while if we can accept the testimony of the Letter to the Galatians as that of a genuine declaration by Paul himself, we must push back the beginnings of the struggle another half century or so.¹

*The Terminus
a quo.*

¹ In this connection it would be interesting to determine the exact date of Paul's conversion, but this is impossible to do with any precision. The various authorities give it as anywhere between 28-36 A.D., the 28 limit making it almost coterminous with the earliest possible date of the crucifixion according to the canonical date. This early date, however, allows no time for anything but a sudden and unorganised outbreak of official fury directed against the followers of Jesus immediately after his execution (according to canonical tradition), and such a sudden outbreak seems out of keeping with the extended "persecuting" and "wasting" of the "Church of God" referred to by Paul. But was the "Church" of tradition as imagined by the scribe of the Acts (viii. 3) the same as the "Church of God" in Paul's living memory? Did the latter then possess the identical story related a century later in the canonical Gospels? And if so, why does Paul seem to be almost entirely ignorant of this story in spite of lengthy acquaintance with that "Church" while wasting it, and in spite of subsequent conversion?

Seeing, then, that few reject this testimony, as far as most of us are concerned there is nothing *à priori* to prevent the genesis of the original forms of some of these Talmud stories going back even to some 30 years A.D., while for others we can at best only push their origin back stage by stage with the evolution of Christian dogma—that is to say with the externalizing and historicizing of the mystic teachings of the inner tradition. As Christian popular propaganda gradually departed from the sober paths of prosaic history and simple ethical instruction, owing to the externalizing of the exalted and romantic experiences of the mystics and the bringing of the “mysteries” to earth by historicizing them, so did the Rabbinical opponents of this new movement confront its extravagance with the remorseless logic of material fact.

The Probable
Origin of the
Mamzer
Stories.

For instance, the Christ (said the mystics) was born of a “virgin”¹; the unwitting believer in Jesus as *the* historical Messiah in the exclusive Jewish sense, and in his being *the* Son of God, nay God Himself, in course of time asserted that Mary was that virgin; whereupon Rabbinical logic, which in this case was simple and common logic, met this extravagance by the natural retort that, seeing that his paternity was unacknowledged, Jesus was therefore illegitimate, a bastard (*mamzer*).

Round this point there naturally raged the fiercest controversy, or rather it was met with the most contemptuous retorts, which must have broken out the

¹ The spiritual birth, by which a man becomes “twice-born”—the simple mystic fact that so puzzled the Rabbi Nicodemus, according to the writer of the fourth Gospel.

instant the virginity of Mary as a physical fact was publicly mooted by the simple believers of the general Christian body. This particular dogma, however, must have been a comparatively late development in the evolution of popular Christianity, for the "common document" knows nothing of it, the writers of the second and fourth Gospels tacitly reject it, while some of the earliest readings of our Gospels distinctly assert that Joseph was the natural father of Jesus.¹ For the *mamzer* element in the Talmud stories, therefore, we have, in my opinion, no need to go back further than the first quarter of the second century or so as the earliest *terminus a quo*.

For most of the other main elements, however, we have no means of fixing a date limit by the criticism of canonical documents; all we can say is that as early as 30 A.D. even, circumstances were such as to lead us to expect the circulation of stories of a hostile nature.

From the persecution in the time of Paul till the redaction of the Acts a full century elapses, from which we have preserved no witnesses that will help us concerning anything but the *mamzer* element. And even when, following immediately on the period of the Acts redaction, we come to the testimony of Justin Martyr,² in the middle of the second century,

Justin
Martyr

¹ For the latest study of this subject see F. C. Conybeare's article, "Three Early Doctrinal Modifications of the Text of the Gospels," in "The Hibbert Journal" (London; 1902), I. i. 96-113; and also J. R. Wilkinson's criticism in the succeeding issue (Jan. 1903).

² The dates of Justin's genuine writings are variously conjectured, but the general opinion is that they may be placed 145-150 A.D.

we have to be content with generalities, though fortunately (in this connection) such generalities as put it entirely out of doubt that a state of affairs had long existed such as presupposes the existence and wide circulation of similar stories to those found in the Talmud.

From the general testimony of Justin, no matter how we may discount it by his demonstrable blundering in some points of detail, we are certain that the separation between Jews and Christians had for years been made absolute, and if we can trust the repeated statements of this enthusiastic apologist, we must believe that the stages of the separation had been throughout marked by a bitterness and persecution of a quite mediæval character.

Bar Kochba's
Persecution.

In his first "Apology" Justin seeks to rebut the objection that the one whom the Christians call "*the* Messiah" was simply a man born of human parents, and that his wonder-workings were done by magical means—the main contention of the Talmud Rabbis; this he does by appeal to prophecy (c. xxx.). Developing his arguments Justin naïvely admits that the Christians base themselves on the Septuagint Greek translation¹ of the Hebrew sacred writings; nevertheless he accuses the Jews of not understanding their own books, and is surprised that his co-believers are considered as foes and enemies by the Jews because of their interpretation of Hebrew prophecy—a point,

¹ In connection with the origin of which Justin commits a ludicrous blunder, when he makes Herod a contemporary of Ptolemy, the founder of the Alexandrian Library—an anachronism of 250 years!

we may remark, in which modern scientific criticism practically sympathises with the Rabbis. Nay, so bitter were the Jews against them, that whenever they had had the power they had not only punished the Christians but also put them to death—a charge he repeats in several passages;¹ declaring that in his own day the Jews were only deterred from doing so by the Roman authorities.² For instance, in the recent revolt against the Romans led by Bar Kochba (132–135 A.D.), Justin declares that this popular Messiah specially singled out the Christians for torture if they refused to deny that Jesus was the Messiah and utter blasphemies against him (c. xxxi.). It is to be noted, however, that Eusebius and others³ state that Bar Kochba punished the Christians (that is to say, Jewish Christians resident in Palestine) for political reasons, because they refused to join their fellow countrymen against the Romans, and not on theological grounds. If, nevertheless, in spite of this conflict of testimony, we are still to believe Justin, it is of interest to remember that R. Akiba, the founder of the Talmudic method, and the Rabbi who is represented in the Talmud as the greatest opponent of Christianity, threw all his great influence on the side of Bar Kochba, acknowledged him as the true Messiah and paid the penalty of his enthusiastic championship with his life.

From Justin's "Dialogue with Tryphon" we derive still further information, the interest of which would

¹ See "Dial. c. Tryph.," xvi., cx., cxxxiii.

² *Ibid.*, xvi.

³ Eusebius, "Chron.," and Orosius, "Hist.," vii. 13; *cf.* note to Otto's "Justini Opera" (Jena; 1847), i. 79.

be greatly increased for our present research if the identification of Justin's Tryphon with the R. Tarphon of the Talmud, the contemporary of Akiba, could be maintained.¹

General
Charges.

In addition to the general declaration that the Jews hate the Christians (c. xxxv.)—a state of affairs summed up in "The Letter to Diognetus" (c. v.), which some still attribute to Justin, in the words "the Jews make war against the Christians as against a foreign nation"—we have some important details given us which, according to the fancy and taste of the reader, can either be set down as embellishments begotten of *odium theologicum*, or be taken as throwing historic light on the state of affairs and temper of the times which originated the Talmud Jesus stories.

Thus in ch. cxvii., speaking of Jesus as the "Son of God," and addressing the Jew Tryphon, Justin adds, "whose name the high priests and teachers of your people have caused to be profaned and blasphemed throughout the earth." If this accusation was true in Justin's time, it can only refer to the spreading far and wide of inimical stories about Jesus; at that time stories of this kind were spread everywhere throughout the Roman empire, and the source of them was attributed by the Christians to the Jewish priestly aristocracy and especially to the Rabbinical doctors, in other words the Mishnaic Talmudists of those days and earlier.

The Proclama-
tion and the
Curse.

Moreover Justin twice (cc. xvii. and cviii.) categorically asserts that after the "resurrection" the Jews sent out a specially elected body of men, some sort of

¹ But see Strack's "Einleitung in den Talmud" (3rd ed.), p. 80.

official commission apparently, "throughout the world," to proclaim that a godless and lawless sect had arisen from one Jesus, a Galilean impostor, whose followers asserted that he had risen from the dead, whereas the fact of the matter was that he had been put to death by crucifixion and that subsequently his body had been stolen from the grave by his disciples (c. cviii.).

The genesis of this extensive commission may with great probability be ascribed to the imaginative rhetoric of Justin playing on the germ provided by the floating tradition, that Paul was furnished with letters of repression against the heretics when he set forth for Damascus, as stated by the compiler of the Acts. A commission to disprove the dogma of the physical resurrection would not have been necessary until that dogma had gained a firm root in popular belief, and this we hold was a late development (the vulgar historicising of a mystic fact) though somewhat earlier than the dogma of the immaculate conception; but even so it would appear to be a somewhat absurd proceeding to send out a commission to deal with this point only.

There may be, however, some greater substratum of truth in Justin's repeated assertions (cc. xvi., xvi. and cxxxiii.) that it was the custom of the Jews publicly to curse those who believed in "the Christ" in their synagogues; and to this he adds that not only were the Jews forbidden by their Rabbis to have any dealings of any kind with Christians (c. cxii.), but that they were distinctly taught by the Pharisee Rabbis and the leaders of their synagogues to revile and make fun of Jesus after prayer (c. cxxxvii.).

In fact Justin will have it that all the preconceived evil opinion which the general public cherished against the Christians was originated by the Jews (c. xvii.), whom he accuses of deliberately stating that Jesus himself had taught all those impious, unspeakable and detestable crimes with which the Christians were charged (c. cviii.)—an accusation which in no case can be substantiated by the Talmud passages, and which we may presumably set down to Justin's rhetoric.

Estimate of
the Evidence.

But whether or not Justin can be believed in all his details, and no matter how we may soften down his statements, there still remains strong enough evidence to show that in his day the bitterest hostility existed between Jews and Christians, or at any rate between official Judaism and that type of Christianity for which Justin stood. Since Justin attributes all the scandalous stories about Christians,¹ and all the scoffing at the

¹ In connection with which it is of mournful interest to note that Origen ("C. Cels.," vi. 27) says that when "Christianism" first began to be taught, the Jews spread about reports that the Christians, presumably in their secret rites, sacrificed a child and ate its flesh, and that their meetings were scenes of indiscriminate immorality; that even in his own day (c. 250 A.D.) such charges were still believed against them, and they were shunned by some on this account. The curious vitality of this slander is remarkable, for not only did the general Christians of those days charge the "heretics" of the Christian name, to whose assemblies they could not gain access, with precisely the same crime of ceremonial murder, but even up to our own days in Anti-semitic Eastern Europe it is still the favourite vulgar charge against the Jews—a strange turning of the wheel of fate! Even as I correct these proofs, I read in *The Times* (May 2) the horrible account of the murder of some sixty or seventy Jews and Jewesses, and the serious injury of some five hundred more, with "several cases of rape too horrible for detailed description," by the fanatical "Christian," populace of Kishineff, in Bessarabia, who were roused

most cherished beliefs of Justin and the popular Christianity of his day, to the Rabbis, it is evident that what the Jews said was the very antipodes of what Justin believed, and that, as may be seen from the retort of the stealing of the body, the greatest miracles and dogmas of popular Christianity were met on the side of the Rabbis by the simplest retorts of vulgar reason.

The evidence of Justin, therefore, taken as a whole, leaves us with a very strong impression, nay, for all but irreconcilables, produces an absolute conviction, that in his time, taking our dates at a minimum, stories similar to, and even more hostile than, the Talmud stories were in widest circulation; while Justin himself will have it that they were in circulation from the very beginning of things Christian. So far, however, we have come across nothing but generalities; we have failed to find anything of a definite nature which we can identify with some distinct detail of the Talmud stories.

To do this we must mount some quarter of a century, Celsus. and turn to the fragments of Celsus preserved to us in the polemic of Origen, who wrote his refutation of Celsus's attack on the Christians somewhere towards the middle of the third century. Origen in his preface (§ 4) tells us that Celsus himself was long since dead, and later on he adds more precisely (i. 8) that Celsus lived about Hadrian's time (emp. 117-138 A.D.), and later. The most learned of the Church Fathers, however, seems to have blundered in this respect, and

to fury by the report of a supposed "ritual murder" by the Jews of Dubossari, and this in spite of the publication of absolute testimony to the falsity of the charge.

though there is still dispute as to the exact date, modern criticism, basing itself on *data* supplied by the passages cited by Origen from Celsus's "True Word," is generally of opinion that Celsus survived till as late as 175 A.D. In any case Origen wrote a full seventy-five years after Celsus had withdrawn from the controversy, and though we may place the writing of the statements of Celsus as late as 175 A.D., we have also to allow for the possibility, if not the probability, that the memory of this sturdy opponent of Christianity may have reached back some quarter or even half century earlier.

Celsus in his treatise rhetorically throws many of his arguments into the form of a dispute between a Jew and Jesus (Pref. 6, and i. 28). This Jew declares that the extraordinary things Jesus seems to have done were effected by magical means (i. 6), and Origen later on (iii. 1) says that this was the general accusation brought against the miracle-workings by all Jews who were not Christians. This is one of the main elements of the Talmud stories.

The Virgin
Birth Dogma.

From a quotation from Celsus (i. 26) we further learn that the Jews asserted that "a very few years" had elapsed since the dogma of Jesus being the "Son of God" had been promulgated by the Christians, presumably referring to the dogma of the "virgin birth."

Developing his argument, the Jew goes on to say (i. 28) that the dogma of the "virgin birth" was an invention, the facts of the case being: "that Jesus had come from a village in Judæa, and was the son of a poor Jewess who gained her living by the work of her own hands; that his mother had been turned out of doors by her husband, who was a carpenter by trade, on being

convicted of adultery ; that being thus driven away by her husband, and wandering about in disgrace, she gave birth to Jesus, a bastard ; that Jesus on account of his poverty (had to work for his living and) was hired out to go to Egypt¹ ; that while there he acquired certain (magical) powers which Egyptians pride themselves on possessing ; that he returned home highly elated at possessing these powers, and on the strength of them gave himself out to be a god.”²

In this passage from Celsus we have precisely the main outline of the Talmud Jesus stories, and therefore an exact external proof that in his day at any rate (whenever that was, whether 150–175 or even 125–175) stories precisely similar to the Talmud stories were the stock-in-trade Jewish objections to Christian dogmatic tradition.

And if more precise proof is still demanded, we have Ben Pandera. only to turn over a few pages of Origen’s voluminous refutation to the passage (i. 32), where the Church Father again refers to the quotation from the Jew of Celsus given above, and adds the important detail from Celsus that the paramour of the mother of Jesus was a soldier called Panthēra, a name which he also repeats later on (i. 69), in a sentence, by the by, which has in both places been erased from the oldest Vatican MS.,

¹ Can this possibly be based on some vulgar version of a well-known Gnostic myth of those days ? Jesus went down as a servant or slave into Egypt ; that is to say, the Christ or divine soul descends as a servant into the Egypt of the body. It is a common element in the early mystic traditions that the Christ took on the form of a servant in his descent through the spheres, and in many traditions Egypt is the symbol of the body, which is separated by the “Red Sea” and the “Desert” from the “Promised Land.”

² The last two paragraphs are again quoted by Origen (i. 38).

and bodily omitted from three codices in this country and from others.¹ Now this is precisely the name given in some of the Talmud stories ; in them Jesus is called Jeschu ben Pandera (or Pandira), or Ben Pandera simply.

John the
Baptist.

But before we leave Origen it may be useful to note one or two scraps of information which he has let fall in the controversy, and which are of importance for us in our present investigation. Referring to the historicised mystery of the descent of the Dove at the Baptism, Celsus puts the argument into the mouth of his Jew (i. 48), that there is no testimony for this except the word of one of those who met with the same punishment as Jesus. To this Origen replies that it is a great blunder on Celsus's part to put such an argument into the mouth of a *Jew*, for "*the Jews do not connect John with Jesus*, nor the punishment of John with that of Jesus." Now in the first place it is to be observed that Celsus says nothing about any "John," and in the second that Origen gives us clearly to understand that the Jews denied that John the Baptist, who was a well-known historical character, had anything to do with Jesus. This is an important piece of evidence for those who believe that the Baptist element, which does not appear in the "common document," was a later development. Can it be that Celsus had in mind some early form of the Baptism story, in which some other than John the Baptist played a part ?

Elsewhere Celsus, in speaking of the betrayal of Jesus, does not ascribe it to Judas, but to "many dis-

¹ See notes on both passages by Lommatzsch in his "*Origenes contra Celsum*" (Berlin ; 1845).

ciples" (ii. 11), a curious statement if Celsus is repeating what he has heard or read, and is not merely guilty of gross error or of wilful exaggeration.

But indeed Celsus categorically accuses the Christians (ii. 27) of changing their gospel story in many ways in order the better to answer the objections of their opponents; his accusation is that some of them, "as it were in a drunken state producing self-induced visions," remodel their gospel from its first written form in a threefold, fourfold and manifold fashion, and reform it so that they may be able to refute the objections brought against it."

Frequent
Remodelling
of the Gospel
Story.

This may be taken to mean either that the Christians were engaged in doing so in Celsus's day, or that such redacting was habitual. If, however, we are to regard the "threefold" and "fourfold" of Celsus as referring to our three and four canonical gospels, and his "manifold" as referring to the "many" of our "Lukan" introduction, it is difficult to imagine that this was going on in Celsus's time unless his memory went back some fifty years or so. It is, therefore, more simple to regard the statement as meaning that the external

¹ Lit., "coming to appear to themselves"—*εἰς τὸ ἐφ' ἑστέον αὐτοῖς*. This very puzzling sentence is translated by F. Crombie ("The Works of Origen," Edinburgh, 1872, in "The Ante-Nicene Christian Library") as "lay violent hands upon themselves," which does not seem to be very appropriate in this connection. But *ἐφ' ἑστέον* is the usual word used of dreams and visions, and I have therefore ventured on the above translation. Celsus probably meant to suggest that these Christian writers were the victims of their own hallucinations; those who understand the importance of the vision-factor in the evolution of Christian dogma and "history" will thank Origen for preserving this expression of his opponent, though they may put a construction on the words that neither Celsus nor Origen would have agreed with.

gospel story had been continually altered and reformulated to meet objections—in brief, that the latest forms of it were the product of a literary evolution in which mystic experiences played a prominent part.

Value of the
Evidence.

We thus see that the testimony of Celsus, an entirely outside witness, not only strongly endorses the general testimony of Justin, but also adds convincing details which conclusively prove that the Jewish Jesus stories of his day were precisely of the same nature as those we find in the Talmud, and though we cannot conjecture with any certainty what may have been the precise date of any particular story, we are justified in rejecting the contention of those who declare that the Talmud stories are all of a very late date, say the fourth century or so, and in claiming that there is nothing to prevent most of them going back to the middle of the second century, even on the most conservative estimate, while some of them may go back far earlier.

Tertullian.

Advancing another generation we come to the testimony of Tertullian, which is exceedingly important not only with regard to the Talmud Jesus stories, but also in respect of a far more obscure line of tradition preserved in the mediæval "Toldoth Jeschu," or "Story of Jesus," as we shall see in the second part of our enquiry. Writing somewhere about 197-198 A.D., in his "De Spectaculis" (c. xxx.), in a highly rhetorical peroration in which he depicts the glorious spectacle of the second coming, as he imagines it—(when he shall see all the Heathen opponents of the Christians, philosophers and poets, actors and wrestlers in the Games, tossing on the billows of hell-fire)—the hot-

tempered Bishop of Carthage bursts out that, perhaps, however, after all he will not have time to gaze upon the tortures of the Heathen, but that all his attention will be turned on the Jews who raged against the Lord. Then will he say unto them: "This is your carpenter's son, your harlot's son; your Sabbath-breaker, your Samaritan, your demon-possessed! This is He whom ye bought from Judas; this He who was struck with reed and fists, dishonoured with spittle, and given a draught of gall and vinegar! This is He whom His disciples have stolen secretly, that it may be said He has risen, or the gardener abstracted that his lettuces might not be damaged by the crowds of visitors!"¹

All these elements appear in order in the "Toldoth," and the carpenter's son and the harlot's son appear in the Talmud stories. We have thus exhausted our external evidence till the date of the final redaction of the Mishna, 200-207 A.D., beyond which it is of no advantage to go.²

Enough has already been said for our purpose, which was the very simple one of disposing of the flimsy and superficial argument that the Talmud Jesus stories

¹ See also Jerome, "Ad Heliodorum" (Tom. IV., P. II., p. 12, ed. Bened.), and compare Theodoret, "H. S.," iii. 11, as cited in Oehler's "Tertulliani quæ supersunt Omnia" (Leipzig; 1853), i. 62, n.

² See, however, Richard von der Alm (*i.e.*, Friederich Wilhelm Ghillany), "Die Urtheile heidnischer und jüdischer Schriftsteller der vier ersten Jahrhunderte über Jesus und die ersten Christen: Eine Zuschrift an die gebildeten Deutschen zur weiteren Orientirung in der Frage über die Gottheit Jesu" (Leipzig; 1864), a continuation of his "Theologische Briefe an die Gebildeten der deutschen Nation" (3 vols., Leipzig; 1863).

must have been entirely the invention of late Babylonian Rabbis, and that Mishnaic times were utterly ignorant of them, as being too close to the supposed actual facts, which unthinking apologists further presume must have been known to all the Jews of Palestine. We now pass to a consideration of the stories themselves.

VIII.—THE TALMUD 100 YEARS B.C. STORY OF JESUS.

In 1891 Dr. Gustaf H. Dalman, of Leipzig, printed a critical text of all the censured passages in the Talmud, Midrashim, Zohar and Liturgy of the Synagogue which are said to refer to Jesus, and to this H. Laible appended an introductory essay,¹ in which most of the passages were translated.

The Transla-
tion of the
Censured
Passages.

In 1893 A. M. Streane published an English version of this essay, for which Dalman translated the remaining passages, and to which Dalman, Laible, and Streane contributed additional notes, the English edition thus superseding the German.² From lack of any other work in which a version of all the passages may be found, the non-specialist must perforce be content with this Dalman-Laible-Streane translation, though a comparison with other translations of single passages makes one hesitate to accept its entire accuracy, and Streane himself admits in his preface (p. vi) that

¹ "Jesus Christus im Thalmud . . . mit einem Anhang: Die thalmudischen Texte mitgeteilt," von G. Dalman (Berlin ; 1891), in "Schriften des Institutum Judaicum in Berlin," nr. 10. A second edition appeared in 1900.

² "Jesus Christ in the Talmud," etc. (Cambridge ; 1893).

occasionally some Talmud expressions with regard to "our Blessed Lord" have been modified.

The Name
Jeschu.

I am, therefore, glad to be assured by a learned Talmudist that Streane's version, in spite of these drawbacks and its very ungraceful diction, is on the whole sufficiently reliable for all general purposes. I, however, retain throughout the Hebrew or Aramaic form "Jeschu," or perhaps more correctly "Yeschu," which Streane has replaced by the familiar Jesus, because I hold with Krauss¹ that Jeschu is a "genuine Jewish name," and not a nickname invented in despite by the Jews (as charged against them by Christian writers) to escape writing the form Jeshua (Joshua, Jehoshua²), which Christians maintain was the proper Hebrew name of Jesus, thus showing forth by the very name that he was the "Saviour"; least of all that the name *Jeschu* was originally begotten of a cruel letter play based on the the initials of the words of imprecation "*Immach Scheme Vezikro*" ("May his name and memory be blotted out!"), as persistently charged against the Jews by their mediæval Christian opponents, and finally (under stress of hate and ignorance) accepted and adopted by Jews themselves in some of the later forms of the Toldoth Jeschu.³ Jeschu, I hold, was simply the original Hebrew or Aramaic form of the name, as may be seen from the Greek transliteration Ἰησοῦς (Iesūs), or the Arabic 'Isā.

¹ Krauss (S.), "Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen" (Berlin; 1902), pp. 250-253.

² Lit., "The Lord will save."

³ See, for instance, the Vienna Toldoth MS. Compare with this Pessach's invention as given above in the chapter, "The Talmud in History."

Let us, then, first of all turn to what, from the chronological point of view, is the most extraordinary passage, a passage found not once but twice in the Babylonian Gemārā.¹

“The Rabbis have taught: The left should always be repelled, and the right, on the other hand, drawn nearer. But one should not do it . . .² as R. Joshua ben Perachiah, who thrust forth Jeschu with both hands. What was the matter with regard to R. Joshua ben Perachiah? When King Jannai directed the destruction of the Rabbis, R. Joshua ben Perachiah and Jeschu went to Alexandria. When security returned, Rabbi Simeon ben Shetach sent him a letter to this effect: ‘From me, Jerusalem the holy city, to thee, Alexandria in Egypt, my sister. My spouse tarries in thee, and I dwell desolate.’ Thereupon Joshua arose and came; and a certain inn was in the way, in which they treated him with great respect. Then spake Joshua: ‘How fair is this inn (*akhsanga*)!’ Jeschu saith to him: ‘But, Rabbi, she (*akhsanga*=a hostess) has little narrow eyes.’ Joshua replied: ‘Thou godless fellow, dost thou occupy thyself with such things?’ directed that 400 horns should be brought, and put him under strict excommunication. Jeschu oftentimes came and said to him, ‘Take me back.’ Joshua did not trouble himself about him. One day, just as Joshua was reading [? reciting] the Shema,³ Jeschu came to him, hoping that he would take him back. Joshua made a sign to

The Ben
Perachiah
Story.

¹ “Sanhedrin,” 107b, and, in almost identical words, “Sota,” 47a.

² The words omitted by Streane are, “as Elisha who repelled Gehazi nor.”

³ The words: “Hear, O Israel,” etc., Deut. vi. 4 ff.

him with his hand. Then Jeschu thought that he had altogether repulsed him, and went away, and set up a brickbat and worshipped it. Joshua said to him: 'Be converted!' Jeschu saith: 'Thus have I been taught by thee: From him that sinneth and maketh the people to sin, is taken away the possibility of repentance.' And the Teacher [*i.e.*, he who is everywhere mentioned by this title in the Talmud] has said: 'Jeschu had practised sorcery and had corrupted and misled Israel.'" ¹

This famous passage, if taken by itself, would of course fully confirm the hypothesis of the 100 years B.C. date of Jesus. The arguments for and against the authenticity of its statements embrace, therefore, practically the whole substance of our investigation. Let us first of all consider the face value of these statements.

King Jannai. Jannai or Jannæus (John), who also bore the Greek name Alexander, was one of the famous Maccabæan line of kings, the son of John Hyrcanus I., and reigned over the Jews 104-78 B.C.

Though it is now impossible from the imperfect record to ascertain the exact state of Jewish domestic affairs, or the precise causes of the fierce internal religious struggle, during the reign of this wild warrior king,² the salient fact dwelt on by Josephus in both his accounts is that Jannai for the major part of his reign was engaged in a bitter feud with the Pharisean party, whom he had deprived of all their privileges. This Pharisean party was practically the national religious

¹ This formal charge is also found in "Sanhedrin," 43a.

² See Schürer (E.), "A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ" (Eng. Trans.; Edinburgh, 1897), Div. i., vol. i. pp. 295-307.

party who resented the oriental despotism of their Hasmonæan rulers, and above all detested the usurpation of the high priestly office by Jannai. The Pious and Pure could not brook the sight of "a wild warrior like Jannæus discharging the duties of the high priest in the holy place," as Schürer puts it. Bitter internal strife intensified by religious fanaticism accordingly marked the first eighteen years of Jannai's reign. The Pharisees finally led a rebellion against the hated monarch, in which no less than 50,000 Jews are said to have fallen, and finally the leaders of the nationalist party fled to the stronghold of Bethome or Besemelis.¹ Jannai besieged Bethome and captured it. The prisoners were taken to Jerusalem, and there no less than 800 of them are said to have been crucified to make sport before Jannai and his wives and concubines, the wives and children of the wretched Pharisees having been previously butchered before their eyes. This atrocious act is said to have struck such terror into the hearts of the unfortunate "Rabbis" of the time, that no less than 8000 of them fled, and during Jannai's life-time kept far from Judæa.² This happened about 87 B.C.

The greatest hero of those times, according to Rabbinical tradition, who still withstood the tyrant to the face and boldly berated him with the unaided weapons of Rabbinic wisdom, was Simeon ben Shetach, who is said moreover to have been the brother of Jannai's wife Salome. Many stories of his wise sayings before Jannai are handed on in the Talmud, though it must be con-

¹ For Josephus in his two accounts ("Bell. Jud.," i. 4. 6, and "Antiqq.," xiii. 14. 2) gives these two widely different names.

² Josephus, *ibid.*

fessed that they sound to modern ears somewhat puerile. There are some, however, who think that Simeon too had to flee, and that his withstanding of Jannai took place before the revolt.

Queen Salome
and the
"Golden
Age."

When Salome, however, succeeded her impious spouse, her policy with regard to the Pharisees was the direct antithesis of Jannai's cruel measures. "Salome from the beginning of her reign [78-69 B.C.] took her stand unhesitatingly on the side of the Pharisees, lent an ear to their demands and wishes, and in particular gave legal sanction again to all the Pharisaic ordinances abolished since the time of John Hyrcanus. During these years the Pharisees were the real rulers of the land."¹

As Josephus says: Salome "had indeed the name of regent, but the Pharisees had the authority; for it was they who restored such as were banished, and set such as were prisoners at liberty, and to say all at once, they differed in nothing from masters (of the country)."²

Pharisæan tradition, therefore, naturally depicts the reign of Salome as a golden age, and we are told with true oriental hyperbole, that "under Simeon ben Shetach and Queen Salome rain fell on the eve of the Sabbath, so that the corns of wheat were as large as kidneys, the barley corns as large as olives, and the lentils like golden denarii; the scribes gathered such corns, and preserved specimens of them in order to show future generations what sin entails"³—a somewhat preposterous proceeding, one would suppose, unless the scribes

¹ Schürer, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*, p. 309.

² "Bell. Jud.," i. 5, 2, and "Antiqq.," xiii. 16. 2.

³ "Taanith," 23a.

of that time were gifted with prophetic clairvoyance to descry the subsequent evil days on which the Rabbis fell time and again.

I have been thus long in dwelling on the importance of Salome from a Rabbinical point of view for reasons which will appear more fully later on; for the present it is to be remarked that, if there is any historical basis at all for the passage under consideration, Joshua ben Perachiah presumably fled to Alexandria in 87 B.C., and was probably recalled by Simeon ben Shetach in 78 B.C. He must then have been a very old man, for he is said to have begun to teach as early as 154 B.C.,¹ an assertion, however, which I have been unable to verify. In any case Joshua ben Perachiah and Nithai of Arbela were the second of the famous "Five Pairs" of the "Gurupamparā" chain (to use a Brāhmanical technical term) of Talmudic tradition, while Simeon ben Shetach and Judah ben Tabbai form the third "Pair."

Joshua ben
Perachiah.

According to this "tradition of the fathers," then, Jeschu was regarded as having been originally the pupil of one of the two most learned "Rabbis"² of the time,

Jesu a
Learned Man.

¹ Baring-Gould (S.), "The Lost and Hostile Gospels: An Essay on the Toledoth Jeschu, and the Petrine and Pauline Gospels of the First Three Centuries of which Fragments remain" (London; 1874), p. 56. This very uncritical writer does not give his authority, but probably it was Richard von der Alm, to whose studies we have already referred, and from whom Baring-Gould "lifts" all his information with regard to the Talmud Jesus stories and Toldoth Jeschu, though without any acknowledgment.

² I have put the title "Rabbi" in quotation marks when used of teachers of this period, because I have seen it stated by Jewish authorities that the term "Rabbi" was not so used till after 70 A.D. Unfortunately I have lost my references to this point, but see Bousset (W.), "Die Religion des Judentums in neutestamentlichen Zeitalter" (Berlin; 1903), p. 147: "Der eigentliche Titel Rabbi

nay, of *the* most learned, the "spouse" of Jerusalem; not only so, but Jeschu was apparently Joshua's favourite pupil. See the result of disregarding this counsel of wisdom, said the Rabbis of later days; there is the famous case of the great Joshua ben Perachiah who was too stern with his disciple Jeschu, and with what disastrous results!

But, it may be said, why waste time in speculating on such a transparent anachronism. To this we reply: Even granting the anachronism *à priori*, without further enquiry—seeing that the literature of the times teems with many demonstrably ghastly anachronisms—the passage shows us clearly where Jewish tradition placed Jesus. For it he was a learned man, as indeed is invariably admitted in many other stories; whether or not he got his wisdom from the greatest Jewish teacher of the times or not, is another question.

The Murder
of the
Innocents.

It is further to be remarked that there is a striking similarity between the state of internal Jewish affairs in Jannai's time and the numerous hangings and burnings of Pharisees in the days of Herod (37-4 B.C.). In both reigns the national religious party was led in revolt by those learned in the Law. The Pharisees stood for religion and religious purism against the aristocratic party of the hereditary Sadducæan priesthood, who were interested in the Law solely as a convenient instrument of custom whereby they could extort tithes and taxes out of the people. They were entirely

scheint erst in nachneutestamentlicher Zeit aufgekommen zu sein." If there be any solid ground for this contention, it would, of course, be of great critical importance in considering the date of those passages in the canonical gospels in which the term appears.

indifferent to all those tendencies which had been and were still spiritualising the national religious literature, and presumably they were above all opposed to what they considered the innovating fanaticism of the mystic and disciplinary views held by such circles as the Chassidim and Essenes.

Both reigns are characterised by the triumph of the Sadduceæan party, and by the ruthless murder of large numbers of the Phariseæan leaders, some of whom were indubitably in closest contact with Chassidim and Essene circles, nay, it is most probable that members of these circles, or of associations of a similar nature, were the directly inspiring sources of these religious revolts. It must then have been a bitter memory with the followers of these strict schools of discipline, the later "schools of the prophets," which were seeking to establish the rule of the Righteous and the consequent direct reign of Yahweh on earth, that numbers of their holy ones and seers had been ruthlessly done to death by a Jannai or a Herod.¹

Now, in similar mystic circles these prophets and seers, in one of their grades, were known as "little

The "Little Ones."

¹ Whether in the former case their death had been the cruel and lingering torture of crucifixion is a point of importance only for those Talmudic scholars who argue that crucifixion was an utterly unknown mode of execution among the Jews. There was, they say, beheading, strangling, hanging, stoning and subsequent exposing of the body of the stoned on a post as a warning; moreover, to shorten the cruelty of the lingering death by stoning, the victim was first rendered unconscious by a soporific drink; but never crucifixion. In this connection, however, we must remember that it is said that Jannai remained a Jew in all things, and imposed Jewish customs on all conquered cities on pain of utter destruction, so that it may be doubted whether he "hellenised" solely in the mode of execution of his domestic foes.

ones" or "children." A most interesting tradition of this designation is still preserved in the little-known "Codex Nasaræus" of the Mandaïtes, the so-called Christians of St. John. In the XIth Tractate of their Right-hand Genzā there is a most beautiful story of the mystic Baptism. Jesus comes to Jōhannā to be baptised. Jesus comes as a simple "approacher" seeking initiation into the mystic school of Jōhannā. But Jōhannā is not to be deceived, and immediately recognises Him as the Master, Mandā d'Hajjē Himself, the "Gnosis of Life," by whose power Jōhannā has been teaching and initiating all the long forty and two¹ years of his ministry.

It is too long to quote the beautiful story of how Jōhannā, in giving the lower initiation of external (? psychic) baptism to Jesus, receives the true spiritual Baptism from Mandā d'Hajjē Himself, when "He gave him the grip of the Rushtā, and laid His hand upon him in Jordan; and He made him lay off his garment of flesh and blood; and He clothed him in a raiment of glory."

It is enough for our purpose to set down a few of the sentences put into the mouth of Jōhannā: "Come in peace, Little One. . . . Now I go with thee, Little One, that we may enter the stream. . . . Come, come, Little One of three years and one day, youngest among his brethren but oldest with his Father, who is so small yet his sayings are so exalted."² Seniority in the Essene

¹ He apparently now passes on into the seventh "seven years."

² See "The Liberation of Jōhannā," by Miss A. L. B. Hardcastle, in "The Theosophical Review," vol. xxxi., no. 181, pp. 20-25 (September, 1902); also Brandt (W.), "Mandäische Schriften aus der grossen Sammlung heiliger Bücher genannt Genzā oder Sidrā

and Therapeut communities, it must be remembered, was not reckoned by age, but by the number of years the brother had been a member of the order.

What, now, if we were to fuse these apparently totally unrelated scraps of information together? Might we not ask ourselves how many elements are to be sifted out of the traditional "murder of the innocents"; how many conflation of historical fact and mystic history before the "myth" was brought to birth in its present form? Can there be in it even some reminiscence of the 800 victims of Bethome? The Talmud Rabbis know nothing of Herod's wholesale murder of the children as recounted in the introduction of our first canonical Gospel; Josephus knows nothing of it; yet Joseph ben Matthai had no reason for white-washing the character of Herod, had such a dastardly outrage been an actual fact, for he records his numerous other crimes without hesitation; and the Talmud Rabbis hated the memory of Herod so well that they could not have failed to record such a horror, had he been really guilty of it.

Was Herod
Guilty?

But to return to the words of our Talmud passage. The narrative is introduced by citing what is apparently some famous saying of Rabbinic wisdom. It must be remarked, however, that if Streane's translation is correct,¹ the wisdom of the saying does not

Rabba übersetzt und erläutert" (Göttingen; 1893), p. 195; Tempestini (F.), "Le Code Nazaréen vulgairement appelé Livre d'Adam traduit pour la première fois en Français," in Migne's "Dictionnaire des Apocryphes," vol. i. (Paris; 1856); and Norberg (M.), "Codex Nasaræus, Liber Adami appellatus . . . latineque redditus Hafniæ, n.d., probably first decade of last century).

¹ Moses Levene translates more intelligibly from "Sota," 47a:

immediately appear on the surface, and we must take it in a symbolic sense as referring to such ideas as good and evil, sheep and goats, orthodoxy and heresy; "right" and "left" being the commonest of all symbolic terms, not only in Jewish and Christian but also in Egyptian, Pythagorean and Orphic mysticism.

The "Inn" and the "Horns." As to the inn and hostess story, it is very evident that, if we are to take it literally, we have the veritable birth of a mountain out of a mole-hill. Why the whole orchestra of the Temple at Jerusalem, apparently, should be requisitioned to give world-wide notice of the excommunication of Jeschu, simply because he admired the eyes of a landlady (if that indeed be the meaning of the original)¹ is passing non-oriental comprehension. To relieve ourselves, then, of the intolerable burden of the absurdities which the literal meaning of the story imposes upon us, I venture to suggest that we are here face to face with an instance of Deutsch's "cap and bells" element in the Talmud, and therefore make bold to offer my mite of speculation as to the underlying meaning.

Excommuni-
cation of
Jesus.

Evidently the main point is that Jeschu was formally excommunicated for heretical tendencies from the school or circle over which Joshua presided. The 400 horns, trumpets or trombones may be taken simply to mean that the excommunication was exceedingly formal and serious. The reason for excommuni-

"The right hand of a man should always allure when the left hand repels." See "Jesus and Christianity in the Talmud," "The Theosophical Review," xxix. 316 (December, 1901).

¹ Levene gives the lady's eyes as "oval"; whereas Streane's "little narrow eyes" would seem to be the very opposite of a complimentary remark.

cation was plainly doctrinal. Now Jewish tradition invariably asserted that Jesus learned "magic" in Egypt. The kernel of this persistent accusation may perhaps be reduced to the simple historical element that Jesus went to Egypt and returned with far wider and more enlightened views than those of his former co-disciples, and in this connection it is to be remembered that many scholars have argued, from the strong resemblance between the general features of the earliest Christian churches of canonical tradition and those of the Essene communities, that Jesus was an Essene, or let us say more generally a member of an Essene-like body. I therefore venture on the speculation that the "inn" of our story may cryptically refer to one of such communities, which Joshua considered very excellent, but which Jesus considered to have a too narrow outlook from the standpoint of a more liberal view of things spiritual. It is also of interest to recall to mind that excommunication from the Essene community required the votes of no less than 100 brethren; can the 400 "horns" by any possibility refer to the voices or votes of some specially convened assembly for a very important and formal decision against one whose superior knowledge refused to be bound down by the traditional limitations of the order? Perhaps also there are some who may ask themselves the question: Has the "birth" of the "little one" in the "inn" of the familiar Gospel story any new meaning looked at by the light of these mystic and cryptic expressions?

As we are, then, in highest probability dealing with a story which conceals an under-meaning, it may

The "Brick-bat."

further be conjectured that some precise detail of history underlies the extraordinary expression "he set up a brickbat," which has hitherto been invariably construed as a contemptuous or humorous way of saying, "he became an idolater." This may be the meaning, but, on the contrary, we have to remember that in the general formal charge at the end taken from the same authority from which the Gemārā derives the story, there is no mention of idolatry in this gross sense, nor, if I mistake not, do we anywhere else in the Jewish Jesus stories, Talmudic or Mediæval, meet with this grossly material charge. Has this strange expression, then, any hidden connection with the "rock" and "peter" symbolism, or with the "corner-stone," and therefore originally with Egyptian mystic "masonry" and its initiations—the "hewn-stone" of a Grand Master?

But we have not yet done with this famous story, for it occurs yet again in the Talmud, though in a different form. In the Palestinian Gemārā we thus read:

"The inhabitants of Jerusalem intended to appoint Jehuda ben Tabbai as Nasi¹ in Jerusalem. He fled and went away to Alexandria, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem wrote: 'From Jerusalem the great to Alexandria the small. How long lives my betrothed with you, whilst I am sitting grieved on account of him?' When he withdrew to go in a ship, he said: Has Debora, the landlady who has taken us in, been wanting in something? One of his disciples said: Rabbi, her eye was bright!² He answered: Lo, you

The Jehuda
ben Tabbai
Story.

¹ Prince or President of the Sanhedrin.

² Dalman-Streane add (*op. cit.*, 33), "a euphemism for *blind*," but this gloss would seem to change the whole sense of the story.

have done two things; firstly, you have rendered me suspected, and then you have looked upon her. What did I say? beautiful in appearance? I did not say anything (like this) but (beautiful) in deeds. And he was angry with him and went his way.”¹

As the Palestinian Gemārā is generally considered to be older than the Babylonian, it is naturally argued that we have here the original form of the story which we have been discussing; the name of Jeschu was plainly inserted at a later date, and in this fact we have the simplest possible explanation of this wild anachronism. And it must be confessed that this argument is one of great strength, and for most people entirely disposes of this question.

Is it the
Original Form
of the Jesus
Story?

But even so, it may still be conjectured that the remodelling of the story was a deliberate proceeding on the part of the Rabbis to suit their tradition of certain details in the life of Jesus. Hence, in rejecting the date, it is not absolutely necessary to reject the whole of the Babylonian version as entirely devoid of every element of genuineness.

Again, as to the lateness of the Babylonian version, it is to be observed that the Gemārā quotes from an earlier source or tradition of the story;² and therefore we have to push the date back to this source, which was in all probability Palestinian. It is further to be remarked that the setting of the whole Babylonian version is far more exact in its historical details; it is

¹ “Pal. Chagiga,” 77d.

² See Laible-Streane (*op. cit.*, p. 43), who gloss the opening words of the concluding paragraph as follows: “The same authority which reports this story, says elsewhere.”

a far more deliberate tradition than the vague and pointless Palestinian account.

The Problem
Restated.

But even with regard to the Joshua ben Perachiah date itself, I am not altogether satisfied that it can be so absolutely disposed of as it seems at first glance, for as we shall see in considering another, and in some respects independent, line of Rabbinic tradition preserved in the earliest elements of the Toldoth Jeschu, the Joshua ben Perachiah date is *the* date, and how on earth an apparently so ludicrous anachronism could have held its own for so many centuries is a psychological puzzle of the greatest interest; it argues plainly that the Jews had no difficulty at all in accepting it, and in this connection we must remember that the Rabbis had no belief whatever in the Christian gospel-tradition as history, as we can plainly see from the Jew of Celsus, and that they therefore never dreamed of testing their basic tradition by the Christian gospel story.

The original version in the Palestinian Gemārā, like its Babylonian (or originally Palestinian) variant, is evidently a story of the contact of Jewish orthodoxy with Alexandrian liberalism and mysticism, personified in Debōrah the most famous of ancient prophetesses, the main point being that the orthodox Jew was willing to praise the hospitality of the Alexandrian circles, but refused to praise their doctrines; nay, he cast off a disciple who ventured to praise them, in fear of the taint of heresy thus indirectly attaching to himself. The upholder of this rigid orthodoxy is given as Jehuda ben Tabbai, the "pair" of Simeon ben Shetach.

In adapting this story to the details of their Jeschu

tradition there seems to be no reason why the Rabbis should have altered the name unless the details of that tradition imperatively required it, for it would have been far more natural to have allowed Simeon ben Shetach to write to his contemporary Jehuda, than to have made him write to Joshua ben Perachiah, the leading light of the preceding "pair."

But it must be confessed that reason has seldom anything to do with tradition, and therefore is seldom competent to reveal its mysteries.

We will now proceed to consider an even more startling anachronism which is found in one of the Mary stories.

IX.—THE TALMUD MARY STORIES.

The Mary
Stories Un-
historical.

It is in vain to seek for any historical element in the Talmud Mary stories, for they revolve entirely round the accusation of her unfaithfulness to her husband, and, therefore, in my opinion, owe their origin to, and cannot possibly be of earlier date than, the promulgation of the popular Christian dogma of the physical virginity of the mother of Jesus. When this miraculous dogma was first mooted is exceedingly difficult to decide. We believe, however, that even at the time of the compilation of the canonical Gospels Joseph was still held to be the natural father of Jesus, as we have seen above, and from this we deduce that even in the reign of Hadrian (117–138 A.D.) the dogma of the miraculous birth was not yet “catholicised.”

But how far back can we push the first circulation of this startling belief? For instantly it was publicly mooted even by a restricted number of the faithful, it was bound not only to have attracted the widest notice among the Jews, but also to have called forth the most contemptuous retorts from those who not only hated the Pagan idea of heroes born of the congress of divine and mortal parents as a Heathen superstition and an idolatrous belief, but who were especially jealous of the

legitimacy of their line of descent as preserved in the public records of their families. In this connection there is a passage in the Talmud which deserves our careful attention. It is interesting in other respects, but chiefly because it is found in the Mishna (iv. 3), and therefore puts entirely out of court the contention of those who assert that what is generally regarded as the oldest and most authoritative deposit of the Talmud contains no reference whatever to Jesus; and not only is it found in the Mishna, but it purports to base itself on a still older source, and that too a written one. This remarkable passage runs as follows:

"Simeon ben Azzai has said: I found in Jerusalem a book of genealogies; therein was written: That so and so is a bastard son of a married woman."¹

The Book of
Genealogies.

This Simeon ben Azzai flourished somewhat earlier than Akiba, and may therefore be placed at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century. He was one of the famous four who, according to Talmudic tradition, "entered Paradise"; that is to say, he was one of the most famous mystics of Israel. He was a Chassid, most probably an Essene, and remained a celibate and rigid ascetic till the day of his death. We might, therefore, expect him to be specially fitted to give us some information as to Jesus, and yet what he is recorded to have said is the very opposite of our expectation.

Ben Azzai, we are to believe, declared that he had found a book of genealogies at Jerusalem—presumably then before the destruction of the city in 70 A.D. This book of genealogies can be taken to mean nothing else

¹ "Jebamoth," 49a.

than an official record ; nevertheless we are told that it contained the proof of Jeschu's bastardy, for "so and so" is one of the well-known substitutes for Jesus and Jesus alone in the Talmud, as has been proved and admitted on either side.

If we are right in ascribing the genesis of the Mamzer element of the Jesus stories to doctrinal controversy, we can only conclude that the categorical statement we are considering was originally either a deliberate invention, or the confident assertion in the heat of controversy of some imperfect memory that was only too eagerly believed to refer to Jesus. The Jewish apologist on the contrary can argue that this ancient tradition fully justified his forefathers of later generations for their belief in the bastardy of Jeschu as a historic fact authenticated by the records ; while if he be an out-and-out rationalist he may even go so far as to claim that the " virgin birth " doctrine was invented in answer to this record, and that there has been no historicising of a mystic fact, as we have supposed, seeing that there are no mystic " facts," but only the baseless imaginings of unbalanced enthusiasm.

This we cannot believe, and therefore conclude that the earliest Jewish Mary legends came to birth somewhere towards the close of the first century.

Ben Stada
and Ben
Pandera.

It is exceedingly difficult to classify these Mamzer legends or to treat them in any satisfactory chronological fashion, but it is remarkable that in them there seem to be two deposits of tradition characterised by different names for Jeschu—Ben Stada and Ben Pandera, names which have given rise to the wildest philological speculation, but of which the current mean-

ing was evidently simply "son of the harlot," whatever may have been their line of descent.¹ Ben Stada occurs exclusively in the Talmud, where it is the most frequent designation of Jeschu, though Ben Pandera is also found; Ben Pandera is found in the Toldoth Jeschu, and as we have seen in the Church Fathers, while Ben Stada is never met with in these sources.

The Ben Stada stories are mostly characterised by anachronisms which are as startling as those of the Ben Perachiah date, but which are its exact antipodes. They are further generally characterised by either distinct references to Lud, or by the bringing in of the names of the most famous Rabbis of this famous school of Talmud study. I would suggest, therefore, that these legends might be conveniently called the Lud stories.

The Lud
Stories.

¹ See Krauss (S.), "Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen" (Berlin; 1902), p. 276, where full indications of the literature are appended. A probable speculation is that of Bleek in Nitzsch's article, "Ueber eine Reihe talmudischer und patristischer Täuschungen, welche sich an den missverstandenen Spottnamen Ben Pandera geknüpft," in "Theologische Studien und Kritiken" (Hamburg; 1840), pp. 115-120. Bleek supposes that Pandera is a caricature-name to mimic the Greek *παρθενος* (Parthenos), "Virgin." But there is also perhaps a connection with the Greek *πάνθηρ* (Panthēr), an animal that was regarded as the symbol of lasciviousness. Whether or not there may have been further some connection between this panther-idea and the Egyptian Pasht-cult, it is impossible to say. But Pasht or Bast, the "cat" or "panther" goddess, is supposed to have had rites resembling those of Aphroditē Pandēmos, and the girls of her temple were therefore presumably prostitutes. The derivation of "bastard" is given as equivalent to the old French *fils de bast*, where *bast* means a "pack saddle." The "son of Bast" in Egypt would have been a like term of unequivocal meaning. Still we can hardly venture to connect these too *bast's*, and so must leave the matter as a curious freak of coincidence.

The Mishna School at Lud (Lydda) is said to have been founded by R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, the teacher of R. Akiba,¹ and it was doubtless the great reputation of Akiba as the most implacable foe of Christianity which, in course of time, connected the name of Mary with stories of Akiba which originally were perfectly innocent of any reference to the mother of Jesus. Thus, in later times, we find tradition bringing Akiba and Miriam together in personal conversation, we find it still later giving her one of Akiba's contemporaries as a husband, and finally we meet with a curious legend in which Miriam is made the contemporary of a Rabbi of the fourth century!

But to consider these fantastic developments of Talmudic tradition in greater detail. The following is the famous academical discussion on the refinements of bastardy, which in course of time supplied the Ben Pandera legend with some of its most striking details, as we still find them in various forms of the Toldoth Jeschu.

A Famous
Discussion on
Bastardy

"A shameless person is, according to R. Eliezer, a bastard; according to R. Joshua, a son of a woman in her separation; according to R. Akiba, a bastard *and* son of a woman in her separation. Once there sat elders at the gate when two boys passed by; one had his head covered, the other bare. Of him who had his head uncovered, R. Eliezer said, 'A bastard!'

¹ But when we are told that the famous Jewish proselyte, Queen Helena of Adiabene, passed fourteen years in Palestine (46-60 A.D.) in close communion with the doctors of the Hillel school at Jerusalem and Lud, there was presumably a school at Lud even prior to the time of Ben Hyrcanus.

R. Joshua said, 'A son of a woman in her separation!' R. Akiba said, 'A bastard *and* son of a woman in her separation!' They said to R. Akiba, 'How has thine heart impelled thee to the audacity of contradicting the words of thy colleagues?' He said to them, 'I am about to prove it.' Thereupon he went to the boy's mother, and found her sitting in the market and selling pulse. He said to her, 'My daughter, if thou tellest me the thing which I ask thee, I will bring thee to eternal life.' She said to him, 'Swear it to me!' Thereupon R. Akiba took the oath with his lips, while he cancelled it in his heart. Then said he to her, 'Of what sort is this thy son?' She said to him, 'When I betook myself to the bridal chamber I was in my separation, and my husband stayed away from me. But my paranymp¹ came to me, and by him I have this son.' So the boy was discovered to be both a bastard *and* the son of a woman in her separation. Thereupon said they, 'Great is R. Akiba, in that he has put to shame his teachers.' In the same hour they said, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has revealed His secret to R. Akiba ben Joseph.'"²

Eliezer, Joshua and Akiba were contemporaries, but Akiba was by far their junior; for Eliezer ben Hyrcanus was Akiba's teacher, while Joshua ben Chanania was a disciple of Jochanan ben Zakkai, who died about 70 A.D.; Akiba was put to death in 135 A.D. The setting of the story, therefore, places us somewhere about the end of the first century.

We may pass over the strange ascription of an act Criticism
thereon.

¹ That is, the bridegroom's best man.

² "Kallah," 18b.

of heartless perjury to Akiba as the means whereby he extorted the confession from the boy's mother, and the far more curious addition at the end of the passage which blesses the God of Israel for revealing "His secret" after the use of such questionable means, with the remark that it would be interesting to know whether Talmud apologetics prefer to abandon the reputation of the Talmud or of its great authority Akiba in this instance, for here there is no third choice.

What is most striking in the story is that neither the name of the boy nor that of his mother is given. Laible¹ supposes that the story originally contained the names of Jeschu and Miriam, but that the compiler of the Gemārā struck them out, both because the mother is described as a pulse-seller, while elsewhere in the Talmud she is called Miriam the women's hair-dresser, and also because of the startling anachronism of making Miriam and Akiba contemporaries. He holds that the story itself is of early origin, and was originally a Jesus story.

To this we cannot agree, for if it had been *originally* intended as a Jesus story its inventors could not possibly have been so foolish as to introduce Rabbis of the beginning of the second century among the *dramatis personæ*. This would have been really too inane even for the wildest controversialists at any date even remotely approaching the time when Jews and Jewish Christians were still in contact.

The main intention of the story is evidently to enhance the reputation of R. Akiba, to display the

How it
became a
Mary Story.

¹ Laible-Streane, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

depth of his penetration and his fine appreciation of the subtlest shades of bastardy, a subject of great importance in Rabbinical law. It was then presumably a tradition of the Lud school, and at first had no connection whatever with the Jeschu stories. In course of time, when the Mamzer retort to the virgin-birth dogma was popularised in legend and folk-tale, the details of this other famous story of bastardy were added to the originally vague Mamzer legends of Jeschu, and to this source we may conjecture, with high probability, is to be traced the origin of the coarse details of Miriam's unfaithfulness to her husband as found in the various forms of the Toldoth Jeschu. The link was simply the word "bastard"; the rich gain to the legend material finally entirely outweighed the inconvenience of the wild anachronism.

The story is introduced by the commission of a shocking act of disrespect on the part of one of the boys, for according to Rabbinical law and custom, a teacher was to be treated as worthier of greater honour than all others, even than one's parents. To go uncovered in the presence of a teacher was thus thought to be an act of utter shamelessness; in the West, of course, the very opposite would be the case. Disrespect to the Rabbis as shown in this and other ways is one of the main burdens of accusation brought against Jesus in the Toldoth Jeschu.

We are, then, justified in supposing that any folk-tale or legend of infidelity or bastardy stood a good chance of being gradually worked into the Mamzer patchwork. And indeed we find that this was actually the case. The following story is a good instance of this method of conflation.

The Story of
Paphos ben
Jehudah.

"There is a tradition, Rabbi Meir used to say: Just as there are various kinds of taste as regards eating, so there are also various dispositions as regards women. There is a man into whose cup a fly falls and he casts it out, but all the same he does not drink it (the cup). Such was the manner of Paphos ben Jehudah, who used to lock the door upon his wife and go out. And there is another who, when a fly falls into his tumbler, throws it out and drinks it, and this is the way of men generally. When she is speaking with her brothers and relatives, he does not hinder her. But there is also the man, who, when a fly falls into a dish, sucks it (the fly) out and eats it (the dish). This is the manner of a bad man, who sees his wife going out bareheaded and spinning in the street and wearing clothes slit up on both sides and bathing together with men."¹

How it
became a
Mary Story.

R. Meir was a pupil of Akiba and Paphos (or Pappos) ben Jehudah was Akiba's contemporary. It is not necessary to enter into a consideration of the details of Rabbinic metaphor with regard to the "various dispositions." All we learn from this passage directly with regard to Paphos ben Jehudah is that he locked up his wife; we are, however, led to conclude, indirectly, that she ultimately proved unfaithful to her tyrannical spouse. What, then, more simple than for a storyteller to connect this with the details of unfaithfulness found in his Jeschu *répertoire*. The erring wife was just like Miriam; before long she actually became Miriam, and finally Paphos ben Jehudah was confidently given as Miriam's husband! So they had it in later times, had it, we may suppose, at Lud, that most uncritical of legend

¹ "Gittin," 90a.

factories, and finally we find even so great a commentator as Rashi (*ob.* 1105 A.D.) endorsing with all confidence this hopeless anachronism, when he says: "Paphos ben Jehudah was the husband of Miriam, the women's hair-dresser. Whenever he went out of the house into the street, he locked the door upon her, that no one might be able to speak to her. And that is a course which became him not; for on this account there arose enmity between them, and she in wantonness broke her faith with her husband."

But even eight or nine centuries before Rashi's time the Babylonian Rabbis had found the Ben Stada Lud developments a highly inconvenient overgrowth of the earlier Ben Perachiah date, as we shall see later on, and it is strange to find Rashi so ignorant of what they had to say on the subject.

Startling, however, as is the anachronism which we have been discussing, it is but a mild surprise compared with the colossal absurdity of the following legend, if we interpret it in the traditional fashion.

The Vision of
Rab Bibi.

"When Rab Joseph came to this verse (Prov. xiii. 23), 'But there is that is destroyed without judgment,' he wept. He said: Is there really someone who is going (away), when it is not his time? Certainly (for) so has it happened with Rab Bibi bar Abbai; the angel of death was found with him. The former said to his attendant, Go, bring me Miriam the women's hair-dresser. He went and brought him Miriam the children's teacher. The angel of death said to him, I said Miriam the women's hair-dresser. The messenger said to him, Then I will bring her [the other] back. The angel of death said to him, Since thou

hast brought her, let her be reckoned (among the dead)."¹

Commentary
thereon.

Rab Joseph bar Chia was born at Stili, in Babylonia 259 A.D.; he was head of the famous Babylonian Rabbinical School at Pumbeditha. The only R. Bibi we know of flourished in the fourth century, and that this Bibi was believed to have been the seer of the death-bed vision is quite evident from the following note of the Tosaphoth on the passage:

"‘The angel of death was found with him,’ who related what had happened to him long ago, for this story as to Miriam the women’s hair-dresser took place in the time of the second temple, for she was mother of that so and so [*i.e.*, Jeschu], as is related in (treatise) Shabbath [104b].”

It is by no means clear what the writer of the Tosaphoth meant precisely by “the time of the second temple.” He probably, however, meant the time before the new and splendid edifice of Herod replaced the second temple proper, the meagre building that had become gradually overlooked by the gorgeous Greek palaces of the nobles of Herod’s days.

It must be remarked, however, that this explanation does great violence to the wording of the story as it is found in the Gemārā. Can it be then that some other Bibi was originally referred to, and that the story was subsequently transferred by posterity to his far later but more famous namesake?

That the simple words “bastard” and “adulteress” were strong enough indications of suitability for the match-makers of legend to unite in marriage stories of

¹ “Chagiga,” 4b.

otherwise the strongest incompatibility of age and date, we have already seen ; that the very common name of Miriam should further expand this family circle of cross-breeds is therefore quite to be expected.

And this will doubtless be held by most sufficiently to account for the transference to the address of Miriam the mother of Jeschu of the following two legends ; but closer inspection warns us not too lightly to accept this explanation. In one of the tractates of the Palestinian Talmud we are given the story of a certain devout person who was privileged to see a vision of some of the punishments in hell. Among other sights.

“ He saw also Miriam, the daughter of Eli Betzalim, suspended, as R. Lazar ben Jose says, by the paps of her breasts. R. Jose ben Chanina says: The hinge of hell’s gate was fastened in her ear. He said to them [? the angels of punishment], Why is this done to her ? The answer was, Because she fasted and published the fact. Others said, Because she fasted one day, and counted two days (of feasting) as a set-off. He asked them, How long shall she be so ? They answered him, Until Simeon ben Shetach comes ; then we shall take it out of her ear and put it into his ear.”¹

The Story of
Miriam in
Hell.

As R. Jose ben Chanina was a contemporary of R. Akiba, R. Lazar ben Jose was presumably a Rabbi of an earlier date, but I can discover nothing about him. The main point of interest for us is the sentence, “until Simeon ben Shetach comes.” This can only mean that at the time of the vision Simeon ben Shetach was not yet dead, and therefore this Miriam was at latest

¹ “Pal. Chagiga,” 77d.

contemporary with him and therefore can very well be placed in the days of his older contemporary Joshua ben Perachiah. As to Eli Betzalim,¹ I can discover nothing about him. It is true that a certain Eli is given as the father of Joseph in the genealogy incorporated into the third Gospel, a genealogy which would be quite useless if at the time of its compilation Jesus had not been regarded as the natural son of Joseph, but in the very different genealogy prefixed to the first Gospel, and also purporting to give the descent of Joseph, a certain Jacob takes the place of Eli and the name Eli is not found. But even had the two genealogies agreed, we should not have been helped at all, for they are given as the genealogies of Joseph and not of Mary.

It would also be of interest to know in what Simeon ben Shetach had offended, for he is otherwise known as the Rabbinic president of the golden age of Pharisean prestige in the days of Queen Salome, as we have seen above. In any case the story is an ancient one, for already in the days of Rabbi Lazar and Rabbi Jose there were variants of it.

The "Hinge
of Hell's
Gate."

The phrase "hinge of hell's gate" is curious, and argues an Egyptian (or perhaps Chaldean) setting; it may be compared with the "pivot of the gate of Amenti" of the Khamuas folk-tales, where they relate the punishment of "Dives in Hades." "It was commanded that he should be requited in Amenti, and he is that

¹ Krauss ("Leben Jesu," p. 224) translates "Eli Betzalim" by "Zwiebelblatt" (Onion-leaf) and (p. 225) refers to this Miriam as M. Zwiebelblatt, but does not venture on any explanation. The onion, however, was a symbol of lasciviousness, and may, therefore, perhaps be taken as a synonym of harlot.

man whom thou didst see, in whose right eye the pivot (?) of the gate of Amenti was fixed, shutting and opening upon it, and whose mouth was open in great lamentation." ¹

Finally, in these Talmud Mary-legends we come to the thrice-repeated Miriam daughter of Bilga story, which runs as follows :

"Bilga always receives his part on the south side on account of Miriam, daughter of Bilga, who turned apostate and went to marry a soldier belonging to the government of Javan,² and went and beat upon the roof of the altar. She said to him : 'Wolf, wolf, thou hast destroyed the property of the Israelites and didst not help them in the hour of their distress!'" ³

Miriam and
the Soldier.

This Miriam of Bilga can hardly be supposed to mean the actual daughter of Bilga of I. Chron. xxiv. 14, the head of one of the priestly courses of the house of Aaron. It must mean simply that Miriam was the daughter of one of the priests of the Bilga course or line of descent, for in the days of Bilga himself we

¹ Griffith (F. LL.), "Stories of the High Priests of Memphis" (Oxford ; 1900), p. 49. See also "The Gospels and the Gospel" (London ; 1902), pp. 175-180, where I have pointed out the importance of this episode in the new-found demotic papyrus as a probable source of the Dives and Lazarus story. Was Lazar the name of the seer in some Jewish variant of these popular Egyptian folk-tales? And has some alchemy of name-transmutation brought to birth the name Lazarus of the Dives story of the third Gospel writer? The speculation is a wild one, but not wilder than the transformations of legends with which folk-lorists are on all hands well acquainted.

² That is, Greece (Ionia).

³ "Pal. Sukka," 55d, also in substantially identical words, "Bab. Sukka," 56b, and in "Tosephta Sukka," iv. 28.

know of no attack on Jerusalem by the Greeks, as the story evidently suggests.

In this case, however, it does not seem to be the Talmud or the Jews themselves who connect this story with Miriam, mother of Jeschu, but Dalman,¹ who leaves us to suppose that it is one of the censured passages of the Talmud. What ground, however, Dalman has for bringing this story into relation with the Mary-legends I cannot discover; he seems to depend on Laible,² who refers to Origen quoting Celsus as making his Jew declare that "Mary gave birth to Jesus by a certain soldier, Panthera."

If, because of this, we are to take the above as a Mary story, it should be noticed that the "soldier" is of the "house of Greece," and therefore the date of the incident must be placed prior to the first Roman occupation of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63 B.C.; so that in it, in any case, we find a confirmation of the Ben Perachiah date.

This brings us to the end of our Mary stories; our next chapter will deal with the remaining Talmud Ben Stada Jesus stories.

¹ Dalman-Streane, *op. cit.*, p. 20n.

² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

X.—THE TALMUD BEN STADA JESUS STORIES.

As we have seen already from the evidence of the early Church Fathers, one of the most persistent charges of the Jews against Jesus was that he had learned magic in Egypt. In the Toldoth Jeschu, while we still hear of Jeschu's learning magic in Egypt, the main feature in the story of his acquirement of miraculous power is the robbing of the Shem (the Tetragrammaton or Ineffable Name) from the Temple at Jerusalem by a strange device. The Talmud, however, knows nothing of this robbing of the Shem from the Temple; but in recording the tradition of the bringing of magic out of Egypt it adds details of the means whereby this magic is fabled to have been conveyed out of the country, and in the variants of the story we can trace the evolution of the strange device whereby Jeschu is said in the Toldoth to have outwitted the magic guardians of the Shem.

The Bringing
of Magic
out of Egypt.

Thus in the Palestinian Gemārā we read :

“He who scratches on the skin in the fashion of writing is guilty, but he who makes marks on the skin in the fashion of writing, is exempt from punishment. Rabbi Eliezer said to them: But has not Ben Stada brought (magic) spells out of Egypt just in this way ?

They answered him : On account of one fool we do not ruin a multitude of reasonable men."¹

The same story is also handed on in the Babylonian Gemārā, but with a very striking variant :

The Writing
on the Skin.

"There is a tradition : Rabbi Eliezer said to the wise men, Has not Ben Stada brought magic spells from Egypt in an incision in his body ? They answered him, He was a fool, and we do not take proofs from fools."²

The Tosephta adds yet another variant of the tradition :

"He who upon the Sabbath cuts letters upon his body is, according to the view of R. Eliezer guilty, according to the view of the wise not guilty. R. Eliezer said to the wise : Ben Stada surely learned sorcery by such writing. They replied to him : Should we in any wise on account of a fool destroy all reasonable men ?"³

The Evolu-
tion of the
Legend.

The mention of R. Eliezer and the name Ben Stada indicate that we have here to do with a Lud tradition ; the story, however, must be regarded as one of the oldest of this tradition, for it cites R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, the teacher of Akiba, and the founder of the Lud school. The Palestinian Gemārā evidently preserves the oldest and more detailed account. In it the academical discussion has to do with a very nice point of Sabbath breaking. Writing of any kind on the Sabbath was strictly forbidden. The question then

¹ "Pal. Shabbath," 13d.

² "Bab. Shabbath," 104b.

³ "Tosephta, Shabbath," xi. (xii.) towards the end (ed. Zuckerman, p. 126).

arises: But what if it be on one's skin and not on parchment? Further is there not a difference between scratching in the form of writing,¹ and making marks (that is in some way other than scratching) in the form of writing (that is presumably resembling writing in some way)?

R. Eliezer meets the decision of his colleagues with the objection that Ben Stada brought his spells out of Egypt by "marks" on the skin and not by "scratching." These marks on the skin were presumably not letters proper, that is the writing of words in Hebrew, for the discussion is not as to writing, but as to "marks in the fashion of writing." Does it then refer to diagrams or sigils, or drawings of some kind, or to hieroglyphics?

The Tosephta, it will be noticed, makes havoc of this elaborate argument of the Palestinian Gemārā, and ascribes to the "wise" a judgment the very reverse of what they had given according to the Gemārā; moreover the "scratching" has become "cutting letters upon the body."

While as for the Babylonian Gemārā the whole account is still further altered; no longer is it a question with Eliezer of refuting the opinion of his colleagues with regard to the main point, "marks on the skin in the fashion of writing," no longer is it a question even of "cutting letters upon the body," but we have a totally new and startling gloss, namely the bringing out of Egypt by Ben Stada of spells (presumably written on parchment) in an incision in his body.

The Hiding
of the Parch-
ment.

¹ Laible (*op. cit.*, p. 46) speaks of this "scratching" as tattooing; but there seems no reason why we should give technical precision to such vague indications.

This writing on parchment and hiding the parchment in an incision in the body is precisely the account adopted by the Toldoth Jeschu, and when we come to discuss this second highly complex line of tradition we shall refer again to the subject. All that need be said here is that the Palestinian Gemārā seems plainly to have preserved the earlier account, namely the inscribing of some figures, or more probably hieroglyphs, on the skin. The idea in the mind of the Palestinian Rabbis was presumably that the Egyptians were known to be very jealous of their magic lore and did all they could to prevent books of magic being taken out of the country; Jeschu, then, according to the oldest Rabbinic tradition, was said to have circumvented their vigilance by some such subterfuge as that which has been handed on in the story in the Palestinian Gemārā.¹

The Circum-
cision of the
Heart.

The rank growth from the original nucleus of the legend is plainly shown in the Talmud and the Tosephta. What the real inwardness or nucleole of the nucleus may have been we shall perhaps never know, but it may possibly have been derived from some such mystical expression as the "circumcision of the heart," or the hiding of wisdom in the heart. Meanwhile the story under discussion provides a text in the

¹ It is curious to note that a similar device has been recently made use of by a novelist (A. E. W. Mason, "The Four Feathers," London, 1902). The scene is laid in the Soudan, and on p. 90 we read: "Abou Fatma drove the donkey down amongst the trees. . . . In the left shoulder a tiny incision had been made and the skin neatly stitched up again with fine thread. He cut the stitches, and pressing open the two edges of the wound, forced out a tiny package little bigger than a postage stamp. The package was a goat's bladder, and enclosed within the bladder was a note written in Arabic and folded very small."

Babylonian Gemārā for a commentary in the Gemārā itself which runs as follows :

"Ben Stada was Ben Pandera. Rab Chisda said: The husband was Stada, the lover Pandera. (Another said): The husband was Paphos ben Jehuda; Stada was his mother; (or) his mother was Miriam the women's hairdresser; as they would say at Pumbeditha, *S'tath da* (i.e., she was unfaithful) to her husband." ¹

The Rabbis
puzzled by
their own
Creations.

It is exceedingly difficult to make out from the stopping of this translation who said what, but the sentence "(or) his mother was Miriam the women's hairdresser," seems to be a gloss or interpolation, and the words "as they would say" seem to follow naturally after "Stada was his mother." Be this as it may be, our interesting passage makes it quite clear that by this time legend had reached so rank a growth that even the Rabbis themselves in many places had lost all trace of its origin, of its earliest authentic form. At any rate they were all at sixes and sevens on the subject in Babylonia. All they were quite certain of was that Ben Stada and Ben Pandera were intended for one and the same person, but as to who Stada or Pandera may have been they had no definite information.

Rab Chisda was one of the most famous Rabbis of the school at Sura (one of the greatest centres of Talmudic activity in Babylonia) and died 309 A.D.; he evidently was greatly puzzled to account for the apparently contradictory *aliases* bestowed on Jeschu by Rabbinical tradition. The Rabbis of Pumbeditha

¹ "Bab Shabbath," 104b; repeated in almost identical words in "Bab. Sanhedrin," 67a.

(another of the great centres of Talmudic learning in Eastern Jewry), on the contrary, seem to have preserved a correct tradition of the origin of the nickname Ben Stada, though they appear to have taken Ben Pandera as a proper form. Whether or not the Pumbeditha derivation is correct in the letter, is a question for specialists to decide; it is in my opinion, however, certainly correct in spirit, for, as I have already argued, Ben Pandera came into existence as an offset to the "virgin's son" of Christian popular theology, and I am further persuaded that Ben Stada had also a similar genesis, whatever may have been the precise philological details of their birth.

That the later Babylonian Rabbis were puzzled and at loggerheads on the subject is quite evident from the record of their *Gemārā*; but that there was elsewhere a certain tradition of the Ben Perachiah date is shown by the additional information contained in the mediæval *Tosaphoth* to this passage.

A Mediæval
Commentator.

" 'Ben Stada.' Rabbenu Tam says that this is not Jeschu ha-Notzri (Jesus the Nazarene), for as to Ben Stada we say here that he was in the days of Pappos ben Jehudah, who lived in the days of Rabbi Akiba, as is proved in the last chapter of *Berachoth* [61b], but Jeschu lived in the days of Jehoshua ben Perachiah, as is proved in the last chapter of *Sota* [47a]: 'And not like Rabbi Jehoshua ben Perachiah who pushed away Jeschu ha-Notzri with both hands,' and Rabbi Jehoshua was long before Rabbi Akiba. 'His mother was Miriam, the women's hairdresser,' and what is related in the first chapter of *Chagiga* [4b]: 'Rab Bibi—the angel of death was found with him, etc., he said to his

messenger: Go and fetch me Miriam the women's hair-dresser'—that means that there lived in the days of Rab Bibi Miriam, a women's hairdresser. It was another (Miriam), or the angel of death was also relating to Rab Bibi a story which happened a long time before."¹

"Our Rabbi Tam" is presumably R. Jacob of Troyes Rabbi Tam. (France), who flourished in the twelfth century,² but I cannot discover to what school he belonged, and therefore to whom "we say here" refers. Rab Tam, however, categorically denies that Ben Stada was the Jeschu of history, and that, too, in face of the widespread Lud tradition which had so strongly imposed itself upon the Babylonian Rabbis. We have ourselves seen how "Ben Stada" came into existence only somewhere about the end of the first century, when he was born of controversy. Rabbenu Tam, therefore, is quite right when he says that "Ben Stada" lived in the days of Paphos ben Jehuda, who lived in the days of Akiba. The truth of the matter, according to Rab Tam, was that the historical Jeschu lived in the days of Jehoshua ben Perachiah; as to the Rab Bibi story, he adds, it too is a gross anachronism, the Miriam referred to was either some totally different person, or the story has been handed on incorrectly.

Rabbi Tam and his school, therefore, held solely to the Jehoshua ben Perachiah date; and they apparently rejected all the Ben Stada stories, but whether or no

¹ "Tosaphoth Shabbath," 104b.

² See Krauss (S.), "Das Leben Jesu" (Berlin; 1902), pp. 227, 274. But Tam has all the appearance of being a by-name, and we cannot be certain of the identification.

they also rejected the Jehoshua ben Perachiah story and simply held to the date, we have no means of ascertaining. If the translation given above is correct, they also held to some ancient categorical statement that Jeschu's mother was a certain Miriam whose occupation was that of hair-dressing; but in doing so we believe they unconsciously became entangled in the meshes of the Ben Stada net.

Miriam
Megaddela.

Miriam, "the women's hair-dresser," seems to be simply another name-play of the Ben Stada and Ben Pandera genus. Miriam, "the women's hair-dresser," is in the original Miriam, "*megaddela nesavva*"; and Miriam Megaddela is the twin of Mary Magdalene for all practical purposes in such word-play. But for a Jew the combination "Miriam of Magdala" was equivalent to saying Miriam the harlot, for Magdala had an unenviable notoriety for the looseness of the lives of its women.¹ As far as Rabbinical tradition, then, is concerned, it seems exceedingly probable that we have here the origin of the otherwise strange combination Miriam the women's hair-dresser, and we should therefore ascribe the time and place of its birth to the same period as the Ben Stada invention and the same circle which produced the Lud legends.

The Mag-
dalene and
the Sophia.

But the origin of the glyph of the Magdalene, out of whom the Christ cast seven devils in the historicised Christian tradition, is, in my opinion, to be traced to a mystic Gnostic source and not to controversial word-play. In Gnostic tradition we find the Sophia in her various aspects possessed of many names. Among them

¹ "Threni Rabba," c. 2 f. 106 (ed. Wilna); see Krauss, *op. cit.*, pp. 274, 275, 286, 303; see also Lwible, *op. cit.*, 16 and 17.

may be mentioned: the Mother or All-Mother; Mother of the Living, or Shining Mother; the Power Above; the Holy Spirit; again She of the Left-hand, as opposed to Christos, Him of the Right-hand; the Man-woman; Prouneikos or Lustful-one, the Harlot; the Matrix; Eden; Achamōth; the Virgin; Barbēlo; Daughter of Light; Merciful Mother; Consort of the Masculine One; Revelant of the Perfect Mysteries; Perfect Mercy; Revelant of the Mysteries of the whole Magnitude; Hidden Mother; She who knows the Mysteries of the Elect; the Holy Dove which has given birth to Twins; Ennoëa; and the Lost or Wandering Sheep, Helena (who the Church Fathers said was a *harlot* whom Simon Magus had picked up at Tyre) and many other names.

All these terms refer to Sophia or the "Soul"—using the term in its most general sense—in her cosmic or individual aspects, according as she is above in her perfect purity; or in the midst, as intermediary, or below as fallen into matter.¹

By help of the above apparently unrelated *data* the thoughtful reader may now be able to sift out some of the elements from the chaos of myth and legend with which we are dealing. Personally we should prefer to continue with the mystical side of early Christianity and take ourselves out of the hurly-burly of vulgar controversy, but the necessities of the task upon which we are engaged compel us to return to the Talmud Lud stories, and the account they give of the condemnation and death of Jesus. Both Talmuds contain a short statement

The Mystic
Element.

¹ See my "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten" (London; 1900) pp. 334, 335.

referring to this, which in both cases is appended to the following passage from the Mishna :

Concerning
the Enticer
to Idolatry.

"In the case of all the transgressors indicated in the Torah as deserving of death, no witnesses are placed in concealment except in case of the sin of leading astray to idolatry. If the enticer has made his enticing speech to two, these are witnesses against him, and lead him to the court of justice, and he is stoned. But if he have used the expression not before two but before one, *he* shall say to him: 'I have friends, who have a liking for that.' But if he is cunning, and wishes to say nothing before the others, witnesses are placed in concealment behind the wall, and he says himself to the seducer: 'Now tell me once again what thou wast saying to me, for we are alone.' If he now repeats it, the other says to him: 'How should we forsake our heavenly Father, and go and worship wood and stone?' If then the enticer is converted, well and good; but if he replies: 'This is our duty; it is for our good,' then those who are standing behind the wall bring him before the court of justice, and he is stoned."¹

The Mishna apparently approves of lying to the enticer to compass his legal condemnation, "For we are alone," says the enticed, when there are others behind the wall. It is also to be noticed that the legal punishment twice referred to for the offence of seducing to idolatry is stoning.

To the above quoted passage from the Mishna the The Stoning of Jesus. Palestinian Gemārā adds :

"The enticer is the idiot, etc.—Lo, is he a wise man ?

¹ "Pal. Sanhedrin," 25c ; "Bab. Sanhedrin," 67a.

No : as an enticer he is not a wise man ; as he is enticed he is not a wise man. How do they treat him so as to come upon him by surprise ? Thus ; for the enticer two witnesses are placed in concealment in the innermost part of the house ; but he is made himself to remain in the exterior part of the house, wherein a lamp is lighted over him, in order that the witnesses may see him and distinguish his voice. Thus, for instance, they managed with Ben Sot'da [a variant of Stada or Satda] at Lud. Against him two disciples of learned men were placed in concealment and he was brought before the court of justice, and stoned."¹

The Babylonian Gemārā is somewhat different, and runs as follows :

" 'And for all capital criminals who are mentioned in the Torah they do not lay an ambush, but (they do) for this criminal.' The Hanging of Jesus.

"How do they act towards him ? They light the lamp for him in the innermost part of the house, and they place witnesses for him in the exterior part of the house, that they may see him and hear his voice, though he cannot see them. And that man says to him : Tell me what you have told me when we were alone. And when he repeats (those words) to him, that man says to him : How can we abandon our God in Heaven and practise idolatry ? If he returns it is well ; but when he says : Such is our duty, and so we like to have it, then the witnesses who are listening without, bring him to the tribunal and stone him. And thus they have done to

¹ "Pal. Sanhedrin," vii. 25d ; also "Pal. Jabamoth," xvi. 15d.

Ben Stada at Lud, and they hanged him on the day before Passover.”¹

“Lud”
Traditions.

Both these accounts are part and parcel of the Lud tradition. The accusation in both cases is the sin of leading away into idolatry; the death in both cases is by stoning, clearly stated in the Palestinian Gemārā, and clearly inferred from the Babylonian, which, however, adds that Jeschu was hanged on the day before the Passover; that is to say, apparently, that after stoning, his body was hanged or exposed for a warning; at any rate this would be the only meaning attached to the statement by a Jew who had never heard the Christian tradition (and the Talmud Jews evidently refused to listen to a word of it), for the Jewish custom was to expose the body of an offender who had suffered the penalty of death by stoning, on a post as a warning to all.

The name “Lud,” however, warns us against seeking for any historical basis in the details of the story, and we should, therefore, dismiss it with the rest of the Lud legends were it not that there exists still another Talmud tradition referring to the subject, and in this the name Lud does not appear. This tradition runs as follows:

The Forty
Days’ Procla-
mation before
Jesus was
Hanged.

“But there is a tradition: On the Sabbath of the Passover festival Jeschu was hung [*sic*, ? hanged]. But the herald went forth before him for the space of forty days, while he cried: ‘Jeschu goeth forth to be executed because he has practised sorcery and seduced Israel and

¹ “Sanhedrin,” 67a; the passage is continued in almost the same words as “Bab. Shabbath,” 104b. “Ben Stada was Ben Pandera,” etc., on which we have already commented at length.

estranged them from God.¹ Let any one who can bring forward any justifying plea for him come and give information concerning it.' But no justifying plea was found for him, and so he was hung on the Sabbath of the Passover festival. Ulla has said, But dost thou think that he belongs to those for whom a justifying plea is sought? He was a very seducer, and the All-merciful has said [Deut. xiii. 8]: 'Thou shall not spare him, nor conceal him.' However, in Jeschu's case it was somewhat different, for his place was near those in power."²

Here there is no mention of Lud, but on the contrary there is no mention of stoning but only of hanging. Laible³ supposes that "Sanhedrin," 43a, was originally a continuation of "Sanhedrin," 67a, and that therefore the omission of "Lud" is quite understandable, seeing that it had occurred immediately before. It is, however exceedingly difficult to believe in such a slicing up of an originally consecutive account, and therefore I am inclined to think that in the passage just quoted we have, if not the original form of the later Lud legend, at any rate an entirely independent account. The story seems to be in the nature of an apology for the execution of Jeschu. The hanging is admitted, but not the crucifixion (of which both Talmud and Toldoth know nothing), and it is interesting in this connection to remember that "hanging" is also preserved in Christian tradition as an equivalent of crucifixion. Whether or not this "hanging" in the minds of the Rabbis was

No Know-
ledge of !
Crucifixion.

¹ This formal charge is repeated twice in the Babylonian Gemārā, "Sanhedrin," 107b, and "Sota," 47a.

² "Bab. Sanhedrin," 43a.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

at this time thought of as the immediate method of death, and they intended further to admit this infringement of the canonical penalty of stoning, is difficult to decide. The formal charge, however, brought against Jeschu is given as that of "having practised sorcery and seduced Israel and estranged them from God." These words can only refer to leading away to "idolatry," and the penalty for this was, as we have seen, stoning.

Jesus "near
those in
power."

But Ulla, a Palestinian Rabbi of the beginning of the fourth century, objects: Why all this precaution when Jeschu was plainly guilty of the charge? We have nothing to apologise for. On this the compiler of the *Gemārā* remarks that Ulla is mistaken in taking this old tradition for an apology or a plea that every possible precaution was taken that Jeschu should have the fullest possible chance given him of proving his innocence. The real reason for all those precautions was that Jeschu was a person of great distinction and importance, and "near those in power"¹ at the time, that is to say presumably, connected by blood with the Jewish rulers—a trait preserved in the Toldoth Jeschu, as we shall see later on. So much, then, for the Lud Jesus stories. We shall next treat of some stories with a name transformation stranger even than Ben Stada.

¹ Laible (*op. cit.*, p. 87) interprets this as referring to the "Roman authorities," and so tries to drag in Pilate by the hair; but in this, as in so much else, Laible seems incapable of taking a purely unbiassed standpoint, for he naively presupposes throughout the absolute historicity of every detail found in the canonical Gospel stories.

XI.—THE TALMUD BALAAM JESUS STORIES.

THAT the identification of Balaam (Bileam) with Jeschu¹ in a number of the Talmud stories we are considering cannot possibly be held in doubt, will be amply seen from the passages which we are now about to bring forward. The precise way in which the identification was arrived at, is, however, somewhat difficult to discover. It may be that we have the starting-point of this curious name-transmutation still preserved in a Midrash on the famous Balaam story in Numbers; on the other hand the origin of this strange name-change may be found in the domain of name-caricature and word-play. Let us first consider the extraordinary Midrash connected with the Numbers' Balaam story.

Bileam-
Jeschu.

“‘He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice’ [Prov. xxvii. 14]. How strong was the voice of Balaam? Rabbi Jochanan said; (It was heard) sixty miles. Rabbi Jehoshua ben Levi said: Seventy nations heard the voice of Balaam. Rabbi Eleazar ha-Gappar says: God gave strength to his voice, and he went up from one end of the world to the other because he was looking about and seeing the nations adoring the sun and the moon and the stars and wood and stone. And he

The Balaam
Midrash.

¹ For the literature, see Krauss, “Leben Jesu,” pp. 267, 268.

looked about and saw that a man, son of a woman, will arise, who seeks to make himself God and to seduce all the world without exception. Therefore, he gave strength to his voice, that all nations of the world might hear (it), and thus he spake: Take heed that you go not astray after that man, as it is written [Num. xxiii. 19], 'God is not a man, that he should lie,'—and if he says that he is God, he is a liar; and he will fall into error and say that he is going away and will come (again) at certain spaces of time, (then) he hath said and will not do it. Look what is written [Num. xxiv. 23], "And he took up his parable and said, Alas, who shall live when he makes himself God!" Balaam intended to say: Alas, who shall live from that nation which gives ear to that man who makes himself God?"¹

Comments
thereon.

R. Jochanan (bar Nappacha) was a distinguished ornament of the Talmud schools at Sepphoris and Tiberias, and died in 279 A.D. at the age of eighty. Jehoshua ben Levi was one of the Rabbis of the Lud school, and flourished in the first half of the third century; while R. Eleazar ha-Gappar (the Pitch-seller) was a contemporary of the famous "Rabbi," R. Jehuda ha-Nasi (Jehuda the Prince), or Jehuda the Holy, who was the final redactor of the Mishna; he flourished somewhere about 200–220 A.D. This story then is presumably to be placed somewhere about the beginning of the third century.

The story is in the form of a naïve prophecy after the event (of which we have thousands of examples in allied Hebrew literature), and makes Balaam quote his

¹ "Jalkut Shimoni" on Num. xxiii. 7, under the name of Midrash Jellammedenu.

own words (Num. xxxiii. 19) as holy scripture. But immediately afterwards R. Eleazar is made to drop the prophetic form of the argument against Christian dogmatics and frankly to tell us what Balaam "intended to say."

The quotation, from Num. xxiv. 23—"Alas, who shall live when he makes himself God!"—is remarkable, for our Authorised Version gives an absolutely different rendering: "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!" And that the Rabbinical exegesis of this passage differed entirely from the received interpretation of the English Authorised Version may be seen from the following glosses as found in the Babylonian Gemārā.

"'Woe to him who lives because he takes [*sic*] God.' Resh Lakish said: Woe to him, who vivifies himself (or who saves his life) by the name of God."¹

Resh Lakish (R. Simeon ben Lakish) was a Palestinian Rabbi who flourished about 250–275 A.D.; he is clearly interpreting this passage in connection with the Jesus stories, for it is precisely by the "name of God," the Shem, that Jeschu vivifies himself, and vivifies others, in the Toldoth Jeschu.

Resh Lakish
and Rashi.

Rashi (*ob.* 1105 A.D.), commenting on this passage says:

"'Balaam who vivifies himself by the name of God,' making himself God. Another reading has it, 'who vivifies himself as to the name of God,' that is, Woe to those men that vivify and amuse themselves in this world and tear the yoke of the Law from their necks and make themselves fat."

Here Rashi not only makes what was given as said

¹ "Bab. Sanhedrin," 106a.

by Balaam about another an act committed by Balaam himself, but further adds that the act committed by Balaam was in reality no other than his making himself God. The only doubt apparently which Rashi had in his mind was whether the prophecy referred to Balaam (*i.e.*, Jeschu) only, or whether it might also be considered as embracing the Christians as well, for presumably they alone can be meant by those who "tear the yoke of the Law from their necks."

Abbahu. Moreover in the Palestinian Gemārā in expansion of the same famous verse in Numbers which contains the most important pronouncement of the traditional Balaam ben Beor,¹ and which constituted the main argument of the Rabbis against Christian dogmatic claims, we read :

"R. Abbahu has said: If a man says to thee, 'I am God,' he lies; 'I am Son of Man,' he shall rue it; 'I ascend to heaven,' this holds good of him, 'He has said it and will not effect it.'"

R. Abbahu of Cæsarea was the pupil of R. Jochanan, who died in 279 A.D. The argument put in his mouth is clearly meant as a complete refutation of Christian dogmatic claims by the quotation of one of the most solemn pronouncements of the Torah.

And if such inconvenient quotations from the Torah were met by the more enlightened of the Christian name, as we know they were by the Gnostics, by the argument that the inspiration of the Torah was of very

¹ Num. xxxii. 19, A.V. : "God is not a man, that he should lie ; neither the son of man, that he should repent ; hath he said, and shall he not do it ? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good ?"

variable quantity and quality, that it came sometimes from a good, sometimes from a mixed, and sometimes from an evil source, the Rabbis replied with still further quotations from the same Torah. Thus we read :

" R. Chia bar Abba said : ' If the son of the whore saith to thee, There be two Gods, answer him, I am He of the Sea, I am He of Sinai.' [That is to say, at the Red Sea God appeared to Israel as a youthful warrior, upon Sinai as an old man, as befits a lawgiver ; but both are one.] R. Chia bar Abba said : ' If the son of the whore say to thee, There be two Gods, answer him, It is here [Deut. v. 4] written not *Gods* but *the Lord* hath spoken with thee face to face.' "

Chia bar
Abba.

R. Chia, or more fully Chia Rabbah, was son of Abba Sela, and flourished about 216 A.D. ; he was a pupil of " Rabbi " (= Jehuda ben Simeon III.), to whom the final redaction of the Mishna is attributed.

It is now evident that the main claims of dogmatic Christianity, that Jesus was God, that he was Son of Man,¹ and that he had ascended to Heaven physically in a miraculous manner, and would return again, were met on the side of the Rabbis with quotations from the

Torah v.
Gospel.

¹ This title, as used in Christian tradition, seems to me to be entirely shorn of all its characteristic meaning if taken, as modern scholarship takes it, to be simply a Greek literal translation of the Aramaic idiom which was in common use as a synonym of " man " pure and simple, thus signifying that Jesus was *the man par excellence*. I am, therefore, inclined to think that the Greek term was of " Gnostic " origin. We know that in Gnostic tradition " The Man," or " Man," was a title of the Logos ; " Son of Man " was therefore a very appropriate designation for one who was " kin to Him," that is, one in whom the " Light-spark " was bursting into a " Flame."

Torah, which they considered to be the infallible word of God, and that the main passage on which they relied was the prophetic declaration of Balaam, made, as they believed, under the direct inspiration of Yahweh.

But if we are asked to believe that here we have a sufficient basis to account for the astounding identification of the subject of subsequent haggadic prophecy with the prophet himself, we can hardly be persuaded that this is the case. Such a topsy-turvy transformation is a *tour de force* beyond even the capability of the legerdemain of Talmudic legend-making.

The only thing that could have given the smallest justification for such an identification would have been some striking similarity between the doings of Balaam and of Jeschu; whereas the very opposite is found to be the case, as we have already seen, and as we are expressly told in the Babylonian Gemārā.

Balaam-
Jeschu a
Prophet.

“ ‘ And Balaam, son of Beor, the soothsayer ’ [Josh. xiii. 22]. Soothsayer? he was a prophet. Rabbi Jochanan said: At first a prophet, at last a soothsayer. Rab Papa said: This is what people say: She was of prominent men and princes (and then) she prostituted herself for mere carpenters.” ¹

According to the tradition of ancient Israel, Balaam ben Beor was a soothsayer who was on one famous occasion compelled to prophesy truth by the power of Yahweh. Balaam-Jeschu, on the contrary, was a prophet; so at any rate the apparently oldest tradition of the Talmud period had it. In the third century R. Jochanan still admitted that Jeschu was

¹ “ Bab. Sanhedrin,” 106a.

"at first" a prophet, but contended that afterwards he fell away and was no longer inspired by the spirit of God. This we see is the exact reverse of the ancient Balaam's case. Could anything, then, be more puzzling than the name-identification Jesus-Balaam in spite of this?

And here the saying attributed to Rab Papa, the founder of the Talmud school at Neresch, near Sura in Babylonia, who died 375 A.D., must delay us for a moment. This saying is universally regarded as referring to Mary, in which case it would confirm the tradition quoted above in a previous chapter, that Jesus was "near those in power." But does this saying really refer to Mary? Rab Papa is apparently quoted as further explaining the statement of R. Jochanan as to the prophetic status of "Balaam." When, then, he says, "She was first of high estate and then she prostituted herself for carpenters," can "she," by any possibility, refer to the teaching of Jesus and not to Mary, who is nowhere mentioned, and who in any case would come in most awkwardly? If this hypothesis can in any way be entertained, R. Papa's saying would then mean that the teaching of Jesus formed first of all part of a true prophetic movement, but afterwards it got tangled up with the carpenter story of popular propaganda and all those other dogmas which the Rabbis so strenuously opposed.

Be this as it may, if there were not some hidden link in the chain of transformation which eventuates in the Balaam-Jeschu identification, it is almost inconceivable that it could ever have held together for a moment. Let us now see whether this hidden link is, after all, so

A Hypothesis.

Balaam-Nicolaos.

difficult to discover. We have already seen that the main charge of the Rabbis against Jesus was that he had corrupted and ruined Israel. In Hebrew the name Balaam means precisely destroyer or corrupter of the people.¹ Have we not here, then, the missing link, and a most natural explanation of this otherwise incomprehensible name-change ?

And if this be so, it is interesting to call to mind the clever conjecture that Nicolaos (νικάν and λάος) in Greek is the exact equivalent of Balaam in Hebrew. And with Nicolaos before us we are at once reminded of certain Nicolaitans who came under the severe displeasure of the Jewish Christian circle to whom the over-writer of the canonical Apocalypse belonged (Rev. ii. 6 and 15). These Nicolaitans have been a great puzzle to the commentators, but many scholars are of opinion that under this name the Pauline Churches are aimed at.² Can it, then, be possible that the Nicolaitans were for the Jewish Christians the Balaamites, the innovators who were throwing off the yoke of the Law and introducing new ideas contrary to the orthodoxy of Jewry ? If this be so, the identification Jeschu-Balaam may be conjectured to have been one of the immediate outcomes

¹ See article "Balaam" in "The Jewish Encyclopædia." "The Rabbis, playing on the name Balaam, call him 'Belo 'Am' (without people ; that is, without a share with the people in the world to come), or 'Billa 'Am' (one that ruined a people)."

² See van Manen's article, "Nicolaitans," in "The Encyclopædia Biblica"; in which, however, the Leyden professor, while stigmatising Balaam = Nicolaos as a mere guess, does not in any way refer to the Talmud problem we are discussing. That the Nicolaitans = the Balaamites, however, is strongly supported by Kohler in his article in "The Jewish Encyclopædia," to which we have just referred.

of Pauline propaganda, and we have again found the origin of yet another Rabbinical nickname of Jeschu in doctrinal controversy.

But the "leading astray" may have gone back even further than the days of Pauline propaganda; and we believe that the original charge against Jesus is to be found in the following passage preserved in the Babylonian Gemārā.

" 'There shall no evil befall thee' [Ps. xci. 10]. (That means) that evil dreams and bad phantasies shall not vex thee. 'Neither shall any plague come nigh thy tent'; (that means) that thou shalt not have a son or disciple who burns his food publicly, like Jeschu ha-Notzri."¹

"Burning
One's Food
Publicly."

What is the meaning of this strange phrase, "to burn one's food publicly"? Dalman² says that this means "to renounce openly what one has learned." Laible³ is of opinion that "public burning of food is a contemptuous expression for the public offering of sacrifice to idols. That the Christians in their assemblies offered sacrifice to idols was as firmly the opinion of the Jews of old time as it is that of many at the present day[!]. Naturally, therefore, it was concluded that Jesus must have commenced it."

In this connection we are further reminded that the charge brought against the Nicolaitans by the final redactor of the Apocalypse is "eating things sacrificed to idols and committing fornication"; upon which van Manen comments: "not because they made a mock of all that is holy and trampled honour underfoot, but

An Apology
for the
Nicolaitans.

¹ "Bab. Sanhedrin," 103a.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 34.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

because they, like 'Paul,' had set aside the Jewish laws regarding foods and marriage, freely using food that had been set before heathen deities, and contracting marriages within the prohibited degrees, which in the eyes of the author of the Apocalypse were unchaste unions, just as in the eyes of the writer of I. Cor. v. 1 the marriage of the Christian who had freed himself from scruples with his deceased father's wife (not his own mother) was so, or as in the eyes of so many Englishmen the marriage with a deceased wife's sister is at the present day."

There is, however, no consensus of opinion with regard to the meaning of the phrase "burning one's food publicly." The Rabbis, we must remember, applied the term "idolatry" in the loosest fashion to everything that was not a strict Jewish custom or belief; and it is hardly to be believed that the early Christians, least of all Jesus himself, could have been accused of "idolatry," in the literal meaning of the word, even by their most bitter opponents. I am, therefore, inclined to think that there may be some other meaning of this "burning of one's food publicly."

A Suggested
Explanation.

The main point of the accusation is evidently contained in the word "publicly." It was the doing of something or other "publicly," which apparently might not only have been tolerated privately, but which was presumably the natural thing to do in private. Now the main burden of Christian tradition is that Jesus went and taught the people publicly—the poor, the outcast, the oppressed, the sinners, to all of whom, according to Rabbinical law, the mysteries of the Torah were not to be expounded unless they had first of all

purified themselves. These ignorant and unclean livers were '*Amme ha-aretz* (men of the earth), and the Torah was not for them. And if it was that no '*Am ha-aretz* was admitted to the schoolhouse, much more strictly were guarded the approaches to those more select communities where the mysteries of the "Creation" and of the "Chariot," the theosophy of Judaism, were studied. To some such community of this kind we believe Jeschu originally belonged; and from it he was expelled because he "burnt his food publicly," that is to say, taught the wisdom to the unpurified people and so violated the ancient rule of the order.

In connection with this there is a remarkable passage, preserved in the Babylonian Gemārā, which demands our closest attention. It runs as follows:

"When our wise men left the house of Rab Chisda or, as others say, the house of Rab Shemuel bar Nachmani, they said of him: 'Thus our learned men are laden' [Ps. cxliv. 14]. Rab and Shemuel, or, as others say, Rabbi Jochanan and Rabbi Eleazar (were of a different opinion). One said: 'our learned' in the Law, and 'are laden' with commandments [*i.e.*, good works], and the other said: 'our learned in the Law and in the commandments,' and 'are laden' with sufferings. 'There is no breaking in,' that our company shall not be like the company of Saul, from whom Doeg, the Edomite, has gone out, and 'no going forth,' that our company shall not be like the company of David, from whom Ahitophel has gone out, and 'no outcry,' that our company shall not be like the company of Elisha, from whom Gehazi has gone out, 'in our streets,' that

On the
"Going out"
from a
"Company."

we shall not have a son or a disciple who burns his food publicly like Jeschu ha-Notzri.”¹

Rab Chisda was one of the Rabbis of the Talmud school of Sura in Babylonia, and died 309 A.D. R. Shemuel bar Nachman (or Nachmani) was a teacher in the Palestinian school at Tiberias, but twice went to Babylonia. He was a pupil of R. Jonathan ben Eleazar, who was a pupil of R. Chanina, who was a pupil of “Rabbi.” R. Shemuel was, then, presumably a contemporary of R. Chisda.

Rab or Abba was the founder of the school at Sura on the Euphrates, and died 247 A.D.; Mar Shemuel was head of the Babylonian school at Nehardea, and died 254 A.D.

R. Jochanan was a Palestinian Rabbi who flourished 130–160 A.D.; R. Eleazar flourished 90–130 A.D.

The words of the text taken from the Psalms run as follows in the Authorised Version: “That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in or going out; that there be no complaining in our streets.”

Doeg,
Ahitophel,
Gehazi.

Doeg, says Cheyne,² “had been detained (so one tradition tells us) ‘before Yahwè’—*i.e.*, by some obscure religious prescription, and had cunningly watched David in his intercourse with the priest Ahimelech. Soon after, he denounced the latter to the suspicious Saul, and when the king commanded his ‘runners’ to put Ahimelech and the other priests to death, and they refused, it was this foreigner who lifted up his hand against them.”

¹ “Bab. Berachoth,” 17a f.

² See article “Doeg,” “Enc. Bib.”

Doeg is called by the strange title "the mightiest of the shepherds."

Ahitophel, the Gilonite, was a councillor of David, and was much esteemed for his unerring insight; he, however, revolted against David and cast in his lot with Absalom's rebellion. He met his death by hanging (2 Sam. xvii. 23).

Gehazi (= Valley of vision) was cast out by Elisha and smitten with leprosy for fraudulently obtaining money from Naaman at the time of the latter's miraculous cure by the prophet.

With these *data* before us let us return to our Talmud passage. It is very evident that the whole point of the story has to do with heresy, with "going forth," or with some scandal or breaking of the established rule or order of things, or with paving the way for so doing. We have seen that in the Talmud stories Balaam is a substitute for Jeschu; can it, then, be possible that in Doeg, Ahitophel and Gehazi also we have to do with name-substitutions?

The answer to this question will perhaps be made clearer by quoting the following passages from the Mishna.

Those who have no Part in the World to come.

"R. Akiba says: He also has no part in the world to come who reads foreign books, and who whispers over a wound and says: 'I will lay upon thee no sickness, which I have laid upon Egypt, for I am the Lord, thy physician.'"

This interesting passage is followed by one of even greater interest.

"Three kings and four private persons have no portion in the world to come. Three kings, namely,

Jeroboam, Ahab and Manasseh. R. Jehudah says: 'Manasseh has a portion therein, for it is said [II. Chron. xxxiii. 13], "and he prayed unto him; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom."' It was objected to him, He brought him again into his kingdom, but he did not bring him again into the life of the future world. Four private persons, namely, Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel, and Gehazi."¹

Siphre
Minim.

These passages are old, for they are found in the Mishna. To take the saying ascribed to R. Akiba (fl. 100-135 A.D.) first. The Gemārā² says that by "foreign books" are meant *Siphre Minim*. The term Minim was for long taken to refer exclusively to Jewish Christians or Christians generally; but this has been hotly disputed of late years by many. It seems certain that though Jewish Christians may be sometimes included in this term, Minim does not mean them exclusively. Nor does Minim always mean "heretics" in a bad sense, it sometimes means "heretics" in its original signification, that is to say, simply the members of some particular school. That, however, most of the Rabbis considered these Siphre Minim, in a bad sense, to include the Gospel, is evident from a gloss in the Munich MS.,³ where the word Evangelium is caricatured as follows:

"Rabbi Meir calls it, 'Awen gillājōn [blank paper, lit. margin, of evil], Rabbi Jochanan calls it, 'Awōn gillājōn [blank paper of sin]."

R. Meir was one of the great redactors of the Mishna

¹ "Sanhedrin," xi. 90a; "Mishna," x. 1, 2.

² "Sanhedrin," 100b.

³ "Shabbath," 116a.

and flourished about 130-160 A.D.; R. Jochanan was his contemporary. *Gillājōn* means literally a "margin," that is, a paper which is left unwritten upon, and is therefore blank.¹ It must be confessed, however, that such apparently meaningless jesting is quite below the level of Rabbinical caricaturing with which we are acquainted, and I am inclined to think that Dalman has not got to the bottom of the matter. I can, however, offer no better conjecture myself.

The formula of healing is an interesting one. Whether or not we are to take "Egypt" literally, or as a substitute for the "body" as it was among certain of the Gnostic schools, must be left to the fancy and taste of the reader; the phrase, "I am the Lord, thy physician," however, reminds us strongly of the "Healers," and the "Servants" of the Great Healer, and suggests memories of some of the derivations conjectured for the names Therapeut and Essene.

We may pass over the three kings in our second Exegesis. Mishna passage, but we cannot pass by the four private persons, Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel and Gehazi, for the combination is so extraordinary that even the most careless reader must be struck by it. What has Balaam ben Beor to do *dans cette galère*? Whose "company" did he leave? Balaam ben Beor may be said rather to have joined forces with the Israelites; he certainly did not leave them. Balaam came in, he did not "go out."

The point of the story is that there are certain persons who have no part in the world to come. R. Akiba has just told us of what kind the orthodox

¹ Dalman, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

Jew considered these to be; they were heretics who looked to other Scriptures as well as the Torah, as we know the Gnostics did most freely, and the general Christians as far as the Gospel Scripture was concerned; they were further healers and wonder-makers, which indeed many of the Essenes, Therapeuts and Gnostics set themselves to be, and which general Christian tradition asserts Jesus and the Apostles were.

But why should Balaam head the list of the condemned, when it is precisely the prophetic pronouncement of Ben Beor that the Rabbis were using for all it was worth against Christian dogmatic claims? Balaam here clearly stands for Jeschu; and if this be so, then it is reasonable to suppose that Doeg, Ahitophel and Gehazi stand for the names of some other teachers who had fallen under severe Rabbinical displeasure. Who they were precisely we have now no means of discovering, and the supposition that they refer to Peter, James and John¹ is considerably discounted by the following strange passage from the Babylonian Gemārā:

Gehazi-Paul.

“Elisha went to Damascus—for what did he go? R. Jochanan has said, that he went for the conversion of Gehazi. But he was not converted. Elisha said to him: Be converted! He answered him: Is it thus that I am converted by thee? For him that sinneth and maketh the people to sin the possibility of repentance is taken away.”²

Rabbi Jochanan flourished 130–160 A.D. It will at once strike the attentive reader that the words put into the mouth of Gehazi are identical with those

¹ See Streane, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

² “Bab. Sanhedrin,” 107b.

of the answer of Jeschu to Joshua ben Perachiah as found in the famous twice-told story of Jeschu's excommunication.¹

The answer is an extraordinary one, and may be taken to mean that the evil (from the point of view of the Rabbis) was irremediable. The thing had spread too far; even if the leaders were now to return to the strict fold of Jewry, the people would still continue to hold the new views which abrogated their servitude to the galling yoke of the Law.

The mention of the name Damascus, moreover, in connection with Gehazi, at once brings Paul to mind, and disturbs the balance of the Peter and James and John supposition as the under-names of Doeg, Ahitophel and Gehazi.

If by any means, then, Gehazi may be held to be a "Elisha." "blind" for Paul, we have to ask ourselves what has Elisha to do in this connection? Does "Elisha" represent some chief of the Sanhedrin? It may be so, but we should also recollect that the Essene communities and similar mystic associations were always looking for the return of Elisha. They were in connection with the line of descent from the "Schools of the Prophets," and expected their great prophet to return again in power to announce the advent of the Messiah. It is hardly necessary in this connection to recall to the reader's recollection the John-Elias of the Gospel story or to refer the student to the elaborate Gnostic tradition of the incarnation of the soul of Elisha in the body of John under the direct supervision of the Master, as found in the "Pistis Sophia"—later

¹ "Sanhedrin," 107b, and "Sota," 47c.

accommodations to the necessities of a historicising evolution. The recollection, however, of these and similar ideas and facts makes us hazard the conjecture that "Elisha" in our Mishna passage may be a "blind" for the official head of the chief Essene community, or at any rate of that "company" who looked to Elisha as its spiritual head. It was from this company that "Gehazi" had "gone out." Whether or not the other "companies" of Saul and David may refer to associations of a somewhat similar nature, I must leave for the consideration of those who are fully persuaded that the literal meaning of our Talmud passage, as far as the four private persons are concerned, was the one furthest from the intention of its Rabbinical authors.

The Disciples
of Balaam
inherit
Gehenna.

However this may be, the Rabbis were convinced that the disciples of Balaam *en bloc* would inherit Gehenna, as we read in the tractate devoted to the "Sayings of the Fathers":

"The disciples of our father Abraham enjoy this world and inherit the world to come, as it is written [Prov. viii. 21]: 'That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and that I may fill their treasuries.' The disciples of Balaam the impious inherit Gehenna, and go down into the pit of destruction, as it is written [Ps. lv. 24]: 'But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.'"¹

And if there should by any chance be still the slightest hesitation in the mind of the reader that Balaam in these passages equates with Jeschu, the

¹ "Aboth," v. 19.

following remarkable passage from the Babylonian Gemārā should for ever set his mind at rest.

“A Min said to R. Chanina: Hast thou by any chance ascertained what age Balaam was? He answered: There is nothing written concerning it. But since it is said, ‘Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days,’ he was either thirty-three or thirty-four years old. The Min answered: Thou hast spoken well; for I have myself seen a chronicle of Balaam in which it is said: Thirty-three years old was Balaam the lame man, when the robber Phineas slew him.”¹

The Age of
Balaam-
Jeschu.

I am not quite certain what R. Chanina is here intended. R. Chanina ben Dosa was a contemporary of R. Jochanan ben Zakkai, who flourished in the last third of the first century; while R. Chanina ben Chama was a pupil of “Rabbi’s,” and therefore must be placed at the beginning of the third century; he lived at Sepphoris in Palestine. That this specimen of Rabbinical exegesis, however, may be ascribed to the earlier Chanina in preference to the later, is suggested by the very similar passage in the same Gemārā, which reads:

“R. Jochanan said: Doeg and Ahitophel lived not half their days. Such, too, is the tenor of a Boraitha²: Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days. All the years of Doeg were not more than thirty-four, and of Ahitophel not more than thirty-three.”³

¹ “Bab. Sanhedrin,” 106b.

² A saying or tradition not included in the canonical Mishna.

³ “Sanhedrin,” 106b (end).

R. Jochanan flourished about 130–160 A.D. As it seems easier to assume that the splitting up of the “33 or 34” between Ahitophel and Doeg was the later development, rather than that the supposed ages of Doeg and Ahitophel should have been conflated into the age of Balaam, I am inclined to think that the R. Chanina of our penultimate passage is intended for the earlier Chanina. If this be so, and the story can be taken as genuine, that is as an old tradition, then we have an early confirmation from outside sources of the thirty-three years of Jesus at the time of his death. But to consider the wording of the passage in greater detail.

A Chronicle of
Balaam.

Laible translates Min as “Jewish Christian”; but it is difficult to believe that a Jewish Christian of any school can have referred to Jesus as Balaam, and therefore I have kept the original without translation. The academical answer bases itself on the threescore and ten years given as the normal life of man in the Torah. It is interesting to note that R. Chanina knows of no Jewish tradition which gives the age of Jeschu; he can only conjecture an answer by means of a kind of Rabbinical *sortilegium* of texts. Wonderful—replies the Min—that is just what I have read in one of the “Chronicles of Balaam”—a Gospel story apparently. We can hardly suppose, however, that we have a direct quotation from this “Chronicle”; we have plainly a Rabbinical gloss put into the mouth of the Min.

Phineas-
Listaa.

Now Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was the priestly leader of the army of Israel which destroyed the Midianites, and slew their kings, and with them Balaam son of Beor (Num. xxxi. 2 ff.). But

why should Phineas be called a "robber" (Aram. *listaa* from the Greek *λῆστης*), as Laible translates it? Rashi explains this word as meaning "general" (*sar tzaba*), and we should remember that though *listaa* is a loan-word from the Greek *λῆστης* (a "robber"), it was with the Jews rather the title of patriotic leaders, of zealots for the Law, as Phineas was represented to be *par excellence*. The meaning is thus simple and clear enough, and we see no reason for Laible's conjecture,¹ that *Lista'a* is a caricature-name for *P'lista'a*—Pilate. No doubt it would be convenient somehow to bring Pilate into the Talmud Jesus Stories, but as a matter of fact his name and every incident of the Gospel story connected with him are conspicuous in the Talmud by their absence. If *listaa* was a caricature-name, we should not find the combination "Phineas Listaa," but Listaa by itself. Otherwise we should expect to come across some such doubles as Ben Stada Balaam—a species of combination nowhere found in the Talmud.

There still remains to be explained the curious combination "Balaam the lame man"; but I have so far met with no satisfactory conjecture on this point, and am quite unable to hazard one of my own.² Laible conjectures that the epithet had its origin in the breaking down of Jesus under the weight of the cross or the piercing of his feet; but did the Rabbis know anything of what Laible presupposes throughout, without any

Balaam the
Lame Man.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

² The article in "The Jewish Encyclopædia" says: Balaam in Rabbinical literature "is pictured as blind of one eye and lame in one foot ('San.,' 105a); and his disciples (followers) are distinguished by three morally corrupt qualities, viz., an evil eye, a haughty bearing, and an avaricious spirit."

enquiry of any sort, to have been the actual ungainsayable history of Jesus?

Finally, with a sublime *tour de force* of inconsistency, the Talmud gives us a story where Balaam and Jeschu are introduced together in the same evil plight, but as entirely different persons and giving absolutely contradictory advice. This story runs as follows:

The Necromancy of Onkelos.

“Onkelos bar Kalonikos, nephew of Titus, desired to secede to Judaism. He conjured up the spirit of Titus and asked him: Who is esteemed in that world? He answered: The Israelites. Onkelos asked further: Ought one to join himself to them? He answered: Their precepts are too many; thou canst not keep them; go rather hence and make war upon them in this world; so shall thou become a head; for it is said [Lam. i. 5]: ‘Their adversaries are become the head,’ *i.e.*, Everyone that vexeth the Israelites becomes a head. Onkelos asked the spirit: Wherewith art thou judged? He answered: With that which I have appointed for myself: each day my ashes are collected and I am judged; then I am burnt and the ashes scattered over the seven seas.

“Thereupon Onkelos went and conjured up the spirit of Balaam. He asked him: Who is esteemed in that world? The spirit answered: The Israelites. Onkelos asked further: Ought one to join himself to them? The spirit said: Seek not their peace and their good always. Onkelos asked: Wherewith art thou judged? The spirit answered: With boiling pollution.

“Thereupon Onkelos went and conjured up the spirit of Jeschu. He asked him: Who is esteemed in that world? The spirit answered: The Israelites. Onkelos

asked further: Ought one to join himself to them? The spirit said: Seek their good and not their ill. He who toucheth them, touches the apple of His eye. Onkelos asked: Wherewith art thou judged? The spirit said: With boiling filth.

"For the teacher has said: He who scorneth the words of the wise is judged with boiling filth. See what a distinction there is between the apostates of Israel and the heathen prophets!"¹

In the first place we ask who was Onkelos and why was he selected as the protagonist in this necromantic *séance*? Onkelos.
Aquila.

Scholars of eminence, though entirely without reference to this passage, have identified the name Onkelos with the Talmudic Akilas, the Greek Akylas (Ἀκύλας), and the Latin Aquila. The most famous Aquila in Jewish history was the translator of the Old Covenant documents into Greek, in a slavishly literal version which was held in the greatest esteem by the Jews as correcting the innumerable errors of the Septuagint version on which the Christians entirely depended. We are not certain of the exact date of this Aquila, but he is generally placed in the first half of the second century.

Now Irenæus, Eusebius, Jerome and other Fathers, and the Jerusalem Talmud itself,² say that this Aquila was a proselyte to the Jewish faith. Moreover, Epiphanius³ states that "Aquila was a relative (the exact nature of the relationship denoted by the otherwise unknown form *πενθερίδης* is doubtful) of the

¹ "Bab. Gittin," 56b ff.

² "Megill.," 71c. 3; "Kiddush.," 59c. 1.

³ "De Pond. et Mens.," c. 14, 15.

Emperor Hadrian, and was appointed by him to superintend the rebuilding of Jerusalem under the new name of Aelia Capitolina; that, impressed by the miracles of healing and other wonders performed by the disciples of the Apostles who had returned from Pella to the nascent city, he embraced Christianity, and at his own request was baptised; that, in consequence of his continued devotion to practices of astrology, which he refused to abandon even when reproved by the disciples, he was expelled from the Church; and that, embittered by this treatment, he was induced through his zeal against Christianity to become a Jew, to study the Hebrew language, and to render the Scriptures afresh into Greek with the view of setting aside those testimonies to Christ which were drawn from the current version on [*sic*, ? of] the Septuagint.”¹

With Dickson, the writer of the article from which we have been quoting, we may set aside the account of Epiphanius as a theological romance to discount the value of Aquila’s translation; he, however, preserves the interesting fact that Aquila was a “relative” of some kind of Hadrian, and this is strongly confirmatory of our conjecture that the Onkelos, nephew of Titus, and the Aquila of history are one and the same person.

Exegesis. With regard to the Talmud passage, however, in which Aquila plays the part of protagonist, it is not very easy to glean the precise meaning. Onkelos-Aquila is about to become a proselyte to Judaism; whereupon he seeks counsel from three of the greatest foes of Jewry according to Rabbinical traditions. These all are made to

¹ See article “Aquila” in Smith and Wace’s “Dictionary of Christian Biography” (London; 1877).

admit the pre-eminence of the Israelites, if not in this world, at any rate in the world to come. Titus, the plain Roman soldier, says that the Jews' religious rules and customs are far too elaborate, and advises his kinsman to make war against them; Balaam is less extreme in his views and advises a moderate policy; while Jeschu is made to regard the Jews as the chosen race, the specially beloved, the apple of Yahweh's eye, and urges Aquila to seek ever their good.

And yet the punishment assigned to these three by Boiling Filth. Rabbinical opinion is in exact inverse proportion to their hostility to Israel. Whatever may be the technical distinction between "boiling filth" and "boiling pollution," they are evidently far more severe forms of torment than the punishment of Titus, who is burnt simply without the added vileness of "filth" or "pollution." Moreover, that by "boiling filth" we are to understand something of the most loathsome nature possible, far exceeding even the foulness of "boiling pollution," may be seen from the statement that this "'boiling filth' is the lowest abode in hell, into which there sinks every foulness of the souls which sojourn in the upper portions. It is also as a secret chamber, and every superfluity, in which there is no spark of holiness, falls thereinto. For this reason it is called 'boiling filth,' according to the mysterious words of Is. xxviii. 8: 'There is so much vomit and filthiness, that there is no place clean,' as it is said in Is. xxx. 52: 'Thou shalt call it filth.'"¹

And the reason that this "boiling filth" was chosen

¹ Laible, *op. cit.*, p. 95, quoting from Eisenmenger, "Entdecktes Judenthum" (see for latest edition F. X. Schiefel's, Dresden, 1893), ii. 335 ff., who refers to "Emek hammelech," 135c, chap. xix.

by the Rabbis as the punishment of Jeschu is to be seen in the following deduction ascribed to Rab Acha bar Ulla (who flourished presumably in the second half of the fourth century):

"From this [from Eccles. xii. 12] it follows, that he who jeers at the words of the doctors of the Law, is punished by boiling filth."¹

What the text in Ecclesiastes is to which reference is made, I am not certain. It would seem to refer to verse 11, which runs: "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd," rather than to verse 12, which reads: "And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh."

And in connection with this the Tosaphoth add:

"'Is there [Eccles. xii. 12] then really written עִלּוּ (derision)'? At all events it is true that he is punished by boiling filth as we are saying in Ha-Nezakin."² ³

Dalman⁴ adds in a note: "The Tosaphoth mean, although it may not be allowed to derive this punishment from the words in Eccles. xii. 12, as Rab Acha bar Ulla does, 'Erubin,' 21b, it is nevertheless true." But how Rab Acha derived the "boiling filth" even illegitimately from this text is nowhere explained as far as I can discover, and I fear my readers are no less wearied than myself in following such arid bypaths of perverse casuistry.

¹ "Bab. Erubin," 21b, referring evidently to the last paragraph of the passage from "Gittin," 57, quoted above.

² That is chap. v. of "Gittin," 56b.

³ Tosaphoth to "Erubin," 21b.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

The only thing we learn definitely from all of this is that Jeschu refused to be bound by the exegesis of the Rabbis and their decisions, and in this he seems to the non-Rabbinical mind to have been a wise man, if their decisions were anything like the one before us; whereas for the Rabbis this "scorning" of the words of their doctors was the sin of all sins, and therefore deserving of the greatest torment Hell could brew, and this for the Rabbis, no matter by what means they arrived at it, was the torment of "boiling filth."

We have now come to the end of our Balaam Jeschu stories, but before we pass on to a consideration of what the Talmud has to say concerning the disciples and followers of Jesus, we will append a passage in the Targum Sheni to Esther vii. 9,¹ which is exceedingly curious in several ways and deserves our attention.

The Targum, after relating that Haman appealed with tears to Mordecai for mercy, but in vain, proceeds to tell us that Haman thereupon began a great weeping and lamentation for himself in the garden of the palace. And thereupon is added: "He answered and spake thus: Hear me, ye trees and all ye plants, which I have planted since the days of the creation. The son of Hammedatha is about to ascend to the lecture-room of Ben Pandera."

The Lecture-
Room of Ben
Pandera.

Tree after tree excuses itself from being the hanging-post of Haman; finally the cedar proposes that Haman be hanged on the gallows he had set up for Mordecai.

¹ The A. V. reads: "And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon."

Here again, as in the case of Balaam ben Beor, we have as protagonist a character who was ever regarded as one of the most inveterate enemies of the Jews—Haman ben Hammedatha. With haggadic license Haman is represented as being in the midst of the “garden” in the midst of the “trees”; and yet it is Yahweh himself (though indeed there seems to be some strange confusion between the persons of Yahweh and Haman in the narrative) who addresses the trees “which I have planted since the days of the creation,” and who announces that Haman is “about to ascend to the lecture-room of Ben Pandera.”

The word translated by “lecture-room” is *aksandria*, which Levy in his “Wörterbuch” connects with *Alexandria*, but which Laible says¹ must be explained by ἑξέδρα, the regular term for the lecture room or lecture place of a philosopher; and certainly Laible here seems to give the more appropriate meaning, for what can Alexandria have to do in this connection?

Haman-
Jeschu.

“The lecture-room of Ben Pandera” is then evidently a jesting synonym of the gallows, which in this particular case was not made of wood, otherwise the trees could not *all* have excused themselves. Here then again, according to Jewish tradition, Ben Pandera was hanged and not crucified, for the word gallows expressly excludes all notion of crucifixion. It is indeed a remarkable fact that the point which is above all others so minutely laboured in Christian tradition, the pivot of Christian dogmatics, is consistently ignored by Jewish tradition.

It is also a point of great interest for us in this strange story that the same or very similar elements

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

appear in some of the forms of the Toldoth Jeschu, in which we find that the body of Jeschu cannot be hanged on any tree because he had laid a spell upon them by means of the Shem; the plants, however, had not been brought under this spell, and so the body was finally hung on a "cabbage-stalk."

That there is some hidden connection between this apparently outrageously silly legend and the Haman haggada is evident, but what that connection originally was it seems now impossible to discover. There may even be some "mystic" element at bottom of it all, as the "garden" and "trees" seem to suggest; and in this connection we must remember that there is much talk of a "garden" in the Toldoth, and that, as we have already seen from Tertullian ("De Spect," c. xxx.), there was some well-known early Jewish legend connected with a "gardener" who abstracted the body—"that his lettuces might not be damaged by the crowds of visitors," as the Bishop of Carthage adds ironically while yet perchance unintentionally preserving the "lettuce" and "cabbage-stalk" link of early legend-evolution.

As on the surface and in the letter all this is utter nonsense, we can only suppose that originally there must have been some under-meaning to such a strange farrago of childish fancies; we will therefore return to the subject when dealing with the general features of the Toldoth. Meanwhile the Talmud stories relating to the disciples and followers of Jesus must engage our attention.

THE DISCIPLES AND FOLLOWERS OF JESUS IN THE TALMUD.

The Minim Passages.

It is impossible to be certain whether all of the subsequent "Minim" Talmud passages refer expressly to Christians or not, for the word Min is in itself no certain guarantee, and it must ever depend on the context as to whether it can be taken in this precise sense or not. Since, however, Mr Moses Levene, in his article on "Jesus and Christianity in the Talmud,"¹ quotes these passages as referring to the Christians, we cannot go altogether wrong in provisionally following his lead, for we may plead that according to common Jewish tradition they are taken in this sense, and this is all that concerns us at present. But besides these Minim passages there are others concerning which there can be no possible doubt as to against whom they are intended to be directed, and with these we will begin, still using the Dalman-Laible-Streane version.

The Five Disciples of Jesus.

The first passage is a wearisome academical exercise in name- and word-play, and runs as follows :

"There is a tradition: Jeschu had five disciples (*talmidim*)—Mathai, Nakkai, Netzer, Bunni, Todah.

"Mathai was brought before the judgment seat. He

¹ See "The Theosophical Review," vol. xxix, pp. 316-320.

said to the judges: 'Is Mathai to be put to death? Yet it is written: "*Māthai* (=when) shall I come and appear before God?"' [Ps. xlii. 3]. They answered him: 'Nay, but Mathai is to be executed; for it is said: "*Māthai* (when) shall (he) die and his name perish?"' [Ps. xli. 6].

"Nakkai was brought. He said to them: 'Is Nakkai to be put to death? Yet it is written: "*Naki* (the innocent) and righteous slay thou not"' [Ex. xxiii.] 7. They replied to him: 'Nay, but Nakki is to be put to death; for it is written: "In covert places doth he put to death the *Naki*"' [Ps. x. 8].

"Netzer was brought. He said to them: 'Is Netzer to be put to death? Yet it is written: "A *Netzer* (branch) shall spring up out of his roots"' [Is. xi. 1]. They answered him: 'Netzer is to be put to death; for it is said: "Thou art cast forth from thy sepulchre, like an abominable *Netzer*"' [Is. xiv. 19].

"Bunni was brought. He said: 'Is Bunni to be put to death? Yet it is written: "Israel is *Beni* (my son), my first born"' [Ex. iv. 22]. They answered him: Nay, but Bunni is to be put to death; for it is written: "Behold, I will slay *Binkha* (thy son), thy first born"' [Ex. iv. 23].

"Todah was brought. He said to them: 'Is Todah to be put to death? Yet it is written: "A psalm for *Todah* (thanksgiving)"' [Ps. c. 1, heading]. They answered him: 'Nay, but Todah is to be put to death; for it is written: "Whoso offereth *Todah* honoureth me"' [Ps. l. 23]."¹

Laible introduces his discussion of these "proofs from

¹ "Bab. Sanhedrin," 43a.

The Cruci-
fixion.

scripture" with the following extraordinary sentence: "What is found related of these disciples indeed, namely, their crucifixion, as well as the circumstance that this narrative is immediately connected with the account of the Crucifixion of Jesus," etc.¹ But in the first place there is absolutely not a single word said about crucifixion in the whole passage, nor is crucifixion implied even for the liveliest imagination; nor in the second does the preceding passage in "Sanhedrin," 43a, which refers to the death of Jeschu, say anything of crucifixion, but twice distinctly states that Jeschu was put to death by "hanging." Such positive statements concerning matters of the greatest uncertainty are not proper in an investigation of this nature; it *may be* that Jeschu was crucified, though I am inclined to think he was not, and that the passion of the crucifixion originated from some such mystery-tradition as that preserved in the beautiful ritual of the new-found fragment of the Acts of John,² and certain mystery-rites to which we shall refer at length later on, but the passages in the Talmud which Laible adduces do not *prove* his confident statement.

The Number
Five.

As to the number of disciples, moreover, to me it seems probable that if there had been any other examples of this philologico-legalistic wrangling on hand, we should have had the number increased to six or seven or more; I, therefore, see no necessity for trying to account for the number five on some more complex hypothesis, or to be surprised that the Talmud

Op. cit., 71.

² See my "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten" (London; 1900, pp. 431 ff.).

has preserved no tradition of the symbolically necessitated "twelve."

It is, however, to be noticed that the compiler of the Toldoth Jeschu printed by Huldreich (pp. 35 and 36) gives the names as Simeon, Matthai, Elikum, Mardochai, and Toda, and says that their names were afterwards changed to Peter, Matthew, Luke, Mark, and Paul.

As to the contents of the wrangle, we can only say that if any disciple of Jesus or of any other great teacher had no better *apologia* to put forward *pro vita sua*, he had but little justification for his continued existence; we know, however, that the arguments of Christianity against Jewish legalism were at the very least as powerful as the arguments of the Rabbis against Christian dogmatics. What then can we think of the academical state of mind that could preserve such barren word-play as a precious tradition to be handed down to an admiring posterity! And yet we must not forget that this was not peculiar to the Jews; Babylonians, Egyptians, Zoroastrians, Greeks, Brāhmans, Buddhists and Arabs, all delighted in such pseudo-philological exercises, and as for text-proof for everything under the sun, general Christianity slavishly followed the Rabbis for many a long century.

The "Proof from Scripture."

What, however, interests us most deeply in this quaint Talmud passage is the list of names, for with the exception of Matthai (Matthæus, Matthew), it is exceedingly difficult to equate them with the names of the "twelve" as preserved in Christian tradition.

The Puzzle of the Names.

The attempt to equate Todah with Thaddæus hardly commends itself, for the Jacobite Syrians give this name back as Thaddi and the Nestorians as Thaddai

Todah.

and not Todah. Moreover we have to ask: Who *was* Thaddæus, or the composite-named Thaddæus-Lebbæus-Judas; further, was he of the Twelve or of the Seventy as in the apocryphal Acta?

Nor can we regard the suggestion of Laible¹ that Todah may be the Theudas of Acts v. 36,² as very fortunate, for this Theudas, as Josephus tells us,³ was some popular prophet who pretended to magical power, and led many of the Jews in revolt about 45 or 46 A.D.; so that the author or redactor of the Acts is here guilty of an anachronism, for Gamaliel must have spoken at latest prior to 37 A.D., and apologists are consequently hard put to it to defend the "inspiration" of this passage. Be this as it may, this Theudas can hardly be spoken of as a disciple of Jesus.

We, however, do know of a Theudas who was a "disciple," and the link between Paul and Valentinus; he was a Gnostic.⁴ If, then, Todah is the same as Theudas (which is generally taken to be a shortened form of Theodorus), the only "disciple" Theudas known to Christian tradition with which he could possibly be identified is the Theudas of Paul; like so many other "disciples," however, he had never seen Jesus in the flesh.⁵

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 76.

² Where Gamaliel is made to say to the Sanhedrin: "For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about five hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to naught."

³ "Antiqq.," xx. 5, 1.

⁴ Clement of Alexandria, "Stromat.," vii. 7.

⁵ See my essay, "The Gospels and the Gospel" (London; 1902), pp. 107, 108.

As to the name Bunni, it has been conjectured by Bunni, Thilo¹ and others that Bonai or Bunni is the same as Nicodemus, from a Talmud passage ("Taanith," 20a), where the name of a certain Nakdimon ben Gorion is said to have been properly Bunni. The difficulty in accepting this equation, however, is considerably increased by the further supposition of Laible that Nakkai also stands for Nicodemus. In this connection no one seems so have thought of Bannus, the Essene teacher of Josephus, and I therefore suggest his name for what it is worth. But surely there were many Bunnis and many disciples of Jesus whose names have not been preserved?

Finally, if, as Laible says, Netzer "unquestionably" Netzer, stands for Notzri=Nazarene, we can only reply that such a designation is not much of a distinctive title for one of the disciples of Jesus.

On the other hand, we may ask: Can it be possible that in four of the five names Jewish tradition has preserved genuine names of "disciples" unknown to Christian tradition? And to this we may reply: If the names were not genuine, surely the whole academical discussion would be without point, and therefore deprived of all sting? There remains, however, a further question, suggested by the Netzer-Notzri-Nazarene speculation: Can these names possibly be meant for leaders of schools, and that there was no question of putting the leaders to death physically, but every question of giving an academical *coup de grâce* to their doctrines and activity?

¹ "Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti" (Leipzig; 1832), "Evangelium Nicodemi," p. 550 n.

Are the
Names
Genuine?

Jacob. We will next turn to what the Talmud has to tell us of a disciple of Jesus called Jacob. First of all we have a curious story of the great Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (the founder of the school at Lud and teacher of Akiba), who flourished about 70-100 A.D., who, we know, was put under the ban by Jewish orthodoxy for reasons that are now by no means clear, and who, nevertheless, after his death was regarded as a great light of Israel. It is a story which brings out very strongly the fastidiousness of the Rabbinical mind with regard to any source of doctrine, even a fairly sensible Halacha, as far as Halachoth go, which might in any way be suspected of heresy. The story is found in two almost identical forms, and we might choose either for quotation, but perhaps the citation of both of them will bring out the points more clearly, and be an instructive object lesson in tradition-modification. The first is found in the Babylonian Gemārā and runs as follows:

The Heresy of
R. Eliezer.

“The Rabbis have handed down the following: When R. Eliezer was about to be imprisoned on account of heresy,¹ he was brought to the court of justice to be tried. The judge said to him: Does a man of mature years like thee busy himself with such nullities? Eliezer replied: The Judge is just towards me. The judge thought that Eliezer was speaking of him; but he thought upon his Father in heaven. Then spake the judge: Since I believe thee,² thou art acquitted.

¹ *Minuth*. Laible, *op. cit.*, p. 62, says “a leaning towards the forbidden Christian religion.”

² Dalman translates: “Since I am held by thee to be just.”

"Now when Eliezer came home his disciples presented themselves to console him, but he admitted no consolation. Then R. Akiba said to him: Permit me to tell thee something of what thou hast taught me. He answered: Say on. Then said R. Akiba: Perchance thou hast once given ear to a heresy, which pleased thee; on account of which thou wast now about to be imprisoned for heresy. Eliezer replied: Akiba, thou remindest me. I was once walking in the upper street of Sepphoris;¹ there I met with one of the disciples of Jeschu ha-Notzri, by name Jacob of Kephars Sechania,² who said to me: It is found in your Law [Deut. xxiii. 19]: 'Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore . . . into the house of . . . thy God.' May a retiring place for the high-priest be made out of such gifts? I knew not what to answer him to this. Then he said to me: Thus Jeschu ha-Notzri taught me: 'Of the hire of an harlot has she gathered them,³ and unto the hire of an harlot shall they return' [Mic. i. 7]. From offal it has come; to the place of offal shall it go. This explanation pleased me, and on this account have I been impeached for heresy, because I transgressed the Scripture: 'Remove thy way far from her' [Prov. v. 8], from her, *i.e.*, from heresy."⁴

A Halacha of
Jeschu.

The second form of the story is found in a commentary on Ecclesiastes i. 8: "All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing," though I fail to see the connection. It runs as follows:

¹ A city in lower Galilee.

³ A.V.: "it."

² Siknin.

⁴ "Aboda Zara," 16b f.

A Variant of
the Story.

"It is related of R. Eliezer that he was seized for heresy. A certain governor took him and brought him up to the place of judgment to judge him. He said to him: Rabbi, shall a great man like you be occupied with such vain things? He answered: The Judge is faithful towards me. And as he (the governor) imagined that he was speaking (so) on account of him, though he had only spoken in reference to Heaven (God), he said to him: Because I am faithful in your eyes, I also venture to say: Can it be that these academies are erring (and occupy themselves) with these vain things? *Dimus*,¹ you are set free.

"When Rabbi Eliezer had been dismissed from the tribunal, he was pained because he had been seized for heresy. His disciples came to see him in order to comfort him, but he did not accept (their consolation). Then R. Akiba came to see him, and said to him: Rabbi, perhaps one of the heretics has said before you some word which pleased you. He answered: Lo, by Heaven, you remind me. Once when I was going up in the street of Zippori, a man, named Jacob of Kephars Sechania, came to me and told me something from Jeschu ben Pandera, and I liked it. And this it was: It is written in your Law: 'Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore or the wages of a dog into the house of Yahwè'; how is it with them? I said: They are forbidden. He said to me: Forbidden for sacrifice, but allowed for purposes of destruction. I said to him: But what may then be done with them? He answered: You may build with them baths and privies. I said to him: You have said well, for at this time the Halacha

¹ That is, "*dismissus es*."

was hidden from me. When he saw that I praised his words, he said to me: Thus Ben Pandera hath said: From filth they went [? came], to filth they may go, as it is said: 'For of the hire of an harlot she gathered them, and unto the hire of an harlot shall they return'; they may be applied to public privies. This pleased me, and, therefore, I have been seized for heresy, and also because I transgressed what is written in the Law: 'Remove thy way from her'—that is, the heresy."¹

In the first place the story is clearly intended as an *apologia* for R. Eliezer devised by a later age. What the nature of Eliezer's liberalism may have been we do not know, all we know is that he was finally condemned and lived in exile; but the fact that the Haggada we are considering connects the very slight lapse on the part of R. Eliezer, which it admits, with the teachings of Jeschu, or, at any rate, with Halachoth preserved in the tradition of his school, is a strong confirmation of the supposition that Eliezer was deeply interested in the Christianity of his day, and perhaps this accounts to some extent for the fierce opposition of his pupil the purist Akiba.

Eliezer's Connection with Christianity.

The story shows, moreover, that Jeschu was regarded (and this was admitted by the Rabbis) as being learned in the Law, so that a Halacha attributed to him pleased even such a *connoisseur* as Eliezer. Though the matter discussed may seem to us more than trivial, it was no doubt a point of the greatest importance for the legal purists of the Talmud period. The question seems to have had to do with a retiring place to the chamber in

¹ Kohleth Rabba to Eccles. i. 8 (Pesaro; 1519).

which the high priest had to pass the last week before the day of atonement.¹

In Search of
Dates,

According to the story, R. Eliezer is evidently referring to something which had taken place long ago, so long ago that he had personally forgotten all about it. The retentive mind of his pupil Akiba, however, had not allowed it to escape his memory, and so he recalls it to his teacher's fading recollection. Eliezer is thus represented as an old man, and we may place him then, presumably, somewhere about 100 A.D. Thus we may suppose he had met Jacob some fifty years ago, somewhere about the middle of the first century, and so the words, "Thus Jeschu ha-Notzri taught me," of the first form of the story might be held to confirm the Christian traditional date of Jesus, for according to canonical *data* at 50 A.D., Jacob could very well have been a personal disciple of Jesus.

On the other hand, the words used do not absolutely necessitate such a construction, for such expressions as "thus" Hillel, or Shammai, or Plato, "has taught me" would be the usual form in quoting the sayings of those teachers; while the variant, "thus Ben Pandera² hath said," in the second form of the story, strongly confirms this view, showing that "has said" was taken as identical with "has taught me," and nothing more.

Ben Doma
and the
Serpent,

We have another story of this same Jacob, however, which, instead of placing him at this early date, makes him a contemporary of Akiba (fl. 100-135). Of this story also there are two variants, the first of which is given twice in the Palestinian Gemārā and runs as follows:

¹ Mishna, "Yoma," i. 1. See Laible, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

² A name, however, which Jacob could scarcely have used.

"It happened that R. Eleazar ben Dama was bitten by a serpent. Then came Jacob of Kepharsama,¹ to heal him in the name of Jeschu Pandera.² But R. Ishmael suffered him not. Eleazar said to him: I will bring thee a proof, that he has a right to heal me. But he had no more time to utter the proof; for he died. R. Ishmael said to him: Blessed art thou, Ben Dama, that thou wentest in peace from this world, and didst not break through the fence of the wise, for it is written: 'And whoso breaketh through a fence, a serpent shall bite him,' not a serpent *has* bitten him, but (it means that) a serpent should not [*sic*] bite him in the time to come."³

The variant in the Babylonian Gemārā runs thus: A Variant.

"It happened that Ben Dama, son of R. Ishmael's sister, was bitten by a serpent. Then came Jacob of Kephars Sechania to heal him. But R. Ishmael suffered him not. Ben Dama said: R. Ishmael, my brother, allow me to be healed by him, and I will bring thee a verse from the Torah, showing that it is allowed. But he had not time to complete what he was saying; for his spirit departed from him and he died. Then R. Ishmael exclaimed over him: Happy art thou, Ben Dama, that thy body is pure, and that thy spirit has passed away in purity, and that thou hast not transgressed the words of thy companions (*chabirim*)."⁴

Rabbi Ishmael, when found alone, stands always for

¹ I cannot discover the locality of this village.

² In "Pal. Aboda Zara," 40d, at the bottom, where the same narrative is found, the name is given as Jeschu ben Pandera.

³ "Pal. Shabbath," 14b (lower part).

⁴ "Bab. Aboda Zara," 27b.

R. Ishmael ben Elisha, the contemporary of Akiba. According to this tradition, then, Jacob of Kephars Sechania cannot possibly have been a personal disciple of Jesus, even according to the canonical tradition of the date. We have to notice also, that according to the rigid legalists of the Talmud, the poison of a serpent was thought to be less noxious than the contact with the magnetism or even thought-sphere of a follower of Jesus.

The Story of
James and
the Viper.

Perhaps the following story, taken from the "Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew," or of the "Infancy of Jesus and Mary" (ch. xli.), may have originated in the same medley of legend from which the Talmud derived the main incident of its Ben Dama story.

"And on a certain day Joseph called his firstborn son James to him and sent him into the kitchen-garden to gather herbs to make pottage. And Jesus followed his brother James into the garden, and Joseph and Mary knew it not. And while James gathered herbs there suddenly came a viper out of a hole and wounded the hand of James, and he began to cry out through excessive pain. And when already fainting, he said with a bitter cry, Oh! Oh! a very bad viper has wounded my hand. And Jesus, who stood opposite, at that bitter cry ran to James and took hold of his hand, and did no more than merely breathe upon the hand of James, and soothed it. And immediately James was healed, and the serpent died. And Joseph and Mary knew not what had happened; but at the cry of James they ran into the garden and found the serpent already dead and James quite healed." ¹

¹ Cowper (B. H.), "The Apocryphal Gospels" (6th ed., London; 1897), p. 82.

That, moreover, the Christians of these early days and later were accustomed to heal psychically by means of prayer or the invocation of some holy name is well attested from outside and hostile sources by the following Talmud story, which is also found in two variants. Thus in the Palestinian Gemārā we read:

An Early
Christian
Mode of
Healing.

"His grandson (the grandson of Jehoshua ben Levi) had swallowed something. A man came and whispered to him (a spell) in the name of Jeschu ben Pandera, and he got well. When he went out, he (Jehoshua ben Levi) asked him: What did you say over him? He answered: According to the word of somebody. He said: What had been his fate, had he died and not heard this word? And it happened to him 'as it were an error which proceedeth from the ruler'" [Eccles. x. 5].¹

A commentary on Ecclesiastes x. 5 ("there is an evil which I have seen under the sun as an evil which proceedeth from the ruler") preserves the same story as follows:

"The son of Rabbi Jehoshua ben Levi had something in his throat. He went and fetched one of the men of Ben Pandera, to bring out what he had swallowed. He (Jehoshua ben Levi) said to him: What didst thou say over him? He answered: A certain verse after a certain man. He said: It had been better for him, had he buried him and not said over him that verse. And so it happened to him, 'as it were an error which proceedeth from the ruler.'" ²

"The error that proceedeth from the ruler" most prob-

¹ "Pal. Aboda Zara," 40d.

² "Koheleth Rabba" to Eccles. x. 5.

ably refers to some "planetary" ruler, or one of the "names of the angels" which were guarded so jealously by the Essenes, and of which we find so many examples in Gnostic and allied literature, and in Jewish apocalyptic.

James the
"Brother of
the Lord."

We have seen above that it is impossible to fix the date of Jacob of Kephars Sechania from the contradictory indication of the Talmud stories; but if we survey the whole period from 50 to 135 A.D., which years may be taken approximately as the Talmud *termini* for this Jacob, and look for a Jacob of pre-eminence among the Christians with whom to identify him, the name of "James, the brother of the Lord," presents itself as having the best claim to our attention.

Eusebius tells us¹ that in his day the "most accurate account" of this James was to be found in the fifth book of the Commentaries of Hegesippus, who, he says, "flourished nearest to the days of the Apostles"; modern scholarship, however, assigns the date of writing of Hegesippus's "Memoirs" to about 180 A.D. Eusebius then proceeds to quote from Hegesippus the story of the martyrdom of this James, the setting and tone of which is very Jewish. The most interesting part of the story, however, is the description of James himself, where we read:

James the
Ascetic.

"He was holy from his mother's womb; drank no wine or strong drink, nor ate animal food; no razor came upon his head; he neither oiled himself nor used the bath; he alone was permitted to enter the holy places,² for he never wore wool, but [always] linen. And he used to go alone into the Temple, and was found on his

¹ "Hist. Eccles.," ii. 23.

² τὰ ἁγία.

knees, interceding for the people, so that his knees grew hard like a camel's, because of his kneeling in prayer to God, begging forgiveness for the people. Indeed, on account of his exceeding great righteousness he was called 'the righteous' and Ōlbias, which means in Greek 'defence of the people' and 'righteousness.'"¹

Here we have the picture of a rigid ascetic, a Chassid, an Essene, a Therapeut, a Nazir, for from his mother's womb he was vowed to holiness. It is, however, difficult to understand what is meant by the sentence which I have translated, "he alone was permitted to enter the holy places"—generally rendered the "Holy of Holies," or the "Sanctuary." It is, of course, impossible to believe that James could have been permitted to enter the Holy of Holies of the Temple at Jerusalem, which no one but the high priest, and he only on a certain day in the year, could enter. Nor can we suppose that James alone of all men was accorded the privilege of entering the "shrines," whatever they may mean²; it can only mean that such men alone as those who kept the same rigid rule as James, could do so; for we can hardly suppose that it means that James *alone of the Christians* had this privilege, that is, was the only one of the Christians who kept this rule.

The
"Shrines."

¹ For text, see Routh's "Reliquiæ Sacrae" (2nd. ed., Oxford; 1846), i. 208, 209.

² We know that the Essenes, or at any rate some of the Essenes, would not visit the Temple at Jerusalem, because they regarded it as polluted by blood sacrifices; they had, however, their own "shrines," which they kept most strictly pure. Can the "shrines" of our text be explained in some such fashion?

James the
Disciple not
James the
Just.

With regard to this James the Just, the Righteous (one of the titles of the Essenes and of all who vowed themselves to the service of God), Eusebius gives us some further information of a most interesting nature when he quotes¹ from the sixth book of Clement of Alexandria's lost work "The Institutions," where Clement writes: "Peter and James and John, after the ascension of our Saviour, though they had been preferred by the Lord, did not contend for the honour, but chose James the Just as bishop of Jerusalem"; and in the same book Clement adds: "The Lord imparted the *gnosis* to James the Just, to John and Peter, after his resurrection, these delivered it to the rest of the Apostles, and they to the Seventy."

It seems probable from the first of these passages that James the Disciple and James the Just were quite different persons. It is also to be remarked that in the second paragraph James the Just is apparently preferred to Peter and John, while the Peter, James and John of the first paragraph are of another election. The Gnosis for Clement was the inner teaching of the Master, given, as we see, after the "resurrection," that is to say, when the Master returned to them after the death of His physical body. James the Just then, was one who, because of his strict training, was able to receive this Gnosis psychically and spiritually.

The Testi-
mony of Paul.

In the remarkable passage in which Paul recounts the Epiphanies of the Master, after he had departed from the body, in precisely the same terms as those he uses in describing his own vision, this James is specially

¹ "Hist. Eccles.," ii. 1.

mentioned as one who had enjoyed this high privilege. The familiar passage runs:

"He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve; afterwards he appeared to above five hundred brothers at once, most of whom remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James, then to all the other Apostles, and last of all, as to 'the Abortion,' he appeared to me also."¹

It is here to be noticed that Paul speaks of James and the other Apostles of the time as being known, if not personally, at any rate by reputation, to his correspondents. He also says that most of the five hundred brothers were still alive; but why he should make this remark if the "Cephas" and the "Twelve" were also still alive it is difficult to understand. Can it be that that "Cephas" and that "Twelve" were of a past generation; while the Cephas who was known to Paul, and whom he withstood to the face, was the Cephas of a later "Twelve"?

However this may be, the James known to Paul, James the Righteous, had had, according to Paul, direct experience of the spiritual presence of the Master, while, according to Clement, he had been one of the chief means of communicating the inner teaching of the Master to the Twelve of his day, this James not being one of the original Twelve according to canonical tradition, and that this Twelve further communicated the Gnosis to the Seventy or outer circle of the inner Twelve. James thus seems to have been one of the

Some Difficulties.

¹ I. Corinth. xv. 5-8. For an explanation of the otherwise inexplicable term "The Abortion," see my article, "Some Notes on the Gnostics," in "The Nineteenth Century and After," Nov. 1902.

Three order, the Twelve or the Seventy (?Seventy-two) being lower grades.

But this James the Righteous is farther distinguished by the title "Brother of the Lord." If this epithet is to be taken in its literal sense, we are involved in a host of difficulties, as may be seen by turning to any recent Bible dictionary.¹ Moreover, with the passage of Hegesippus before us, if we are not prepared to abandon it entirely as some have done, we should have to ask: If James was a vowed ascetic from his mother's womb, are we to think that it could have been otherwise with his traditional brother Jesus? And this difficulty is only removed one stage by supposing that James was a cousin of Jesus, a hypothesis, moreover, contradicted by all the canonical data, and only a desperate resort to preserve the dogma of the perpetual Virginity of Mary. Further, if this ascetic and spiritual James was the blood brother of Jesus, why did he not believe on Jesus, as the canonical Gospel account tells us, till after the "resurrection," when, according to Paul, he experienced his vision of the Christ?

The "Brother
of the Lord."

There is, however, a scrap of information dropped by Paul in his first letter to the community at Corinth,² which may throw a gleam of light on this obscure question, and relieve us of some of our difficulties. In his first letter to the Corinth *thiasos* of Christians, or whatever they were called in those days, the unofficial Apostle who practically by his unrestrained propaganda threw open the Christ mystery to the

¹ See articles "James" and "Brethren of the Lord" in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible" and Cheyne's "Encyclopædia Biblica."

² I. Corinth. ix. 5.

Western world, for its helping and its mystification, asks a strange question :

"Have we not," says Paul, "power (or authority) to lead about a sister wife (*ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα*) as well as the rest of the Apostles and the Brothers of the Lord and Cephas?"

What this leading about of a "sister wife" may mean I do not pretend to say, and must refer the curious reader to the *Acta* of Paul and Thecla for how later generations explained it; but we have here "Apostles" as one recognised official class and "Brothers of the Lord" as another, and for all we know "Cephas" may have held an office which constituted a third class. It is difficult to believe that all these took about with them a "sister wife" when we know the rigid asceticism of many of the early communities; but be this as it may, and be the "Cephas" a title or the Gospel Simon Peter, the "Brothers of the Lord" can hardly be taken here to mean the blood-brothers of Jesus. Surely this was a title applying to those who were "kin to Him" (the Logos), as the MS. of the Gnostic Marcus, quoted by Irenæus,¹ has it, those whose "greatnesses," whose angels, contemplate His face perpetually.

If this can in any way be so, the title "Brother of the Lord" as applied to James has a new meaning for us, and many obscurities created by the historicizing Gospel narratives of Post-Pauline days may be cleared away, and the saying that "he who doeth the will of God is my brother" be found to have not been forgotten in the early days.

As for the interpolated qualifying phrase "the brother

A Probable
Solution.

¹ "Adv. Hær.," I. xiv. 1.

of Jesus called the Christ" referring to a certain James mentioned by Josephus,¹ we have already dealt with it in the chapter on "The Earliest External Evidence to the received Date of Jesus."

Ōlbias.

There remains only to refer to the title Ōlbias, which Hegesippus says means "defence of the people." The authorities I have consulted say nothing about this name, and I am unable to make anything out of it philologically, and, indeed, Hegesippus seems to have been in the same case, for it certainly cannot mean *both* "defence of the people" *and* "righteousness," as he says. *Ōlbias*, however, reminds us strongly of *Alphaios* (Alphæus); and James of Alphæus, of whom the canonical tradition preserves little but the name, together with James, son of Zebedee, complete the list of the three Jameses which are such a puzzle even to the most laborious scholarship.

The Talmud
Jacob.

We now have to ask: Can this Jacob the Righteous, Jacob the Episcopus of the Jerusalem community, who is supposed to have been put to death in 67 A.D., be in any way identified with Jacob of Kepharsuchan of the Talmud? It is impossible to give a decided answer to this question, for while one tradition of the Talmud would favour this identification, another tradition would render it impossible. But Talmudic tradition is notoriously indifferent to dates, and presumably selected the name Jacob simply because it was the name of one held in high honour by the Christians. The account of Josephus and the strong Hebrew colouring of the story of Hegesippus, moreover, make it appear exceedingly probable that Jacob the Righteous was well known to

¹ "Antiqq.," xx. ix. 1.

the Jews. It is therefore probable that in this vague fashion there is some connection between our two Jacobs.

We now pass on to a strange story in which a Christian "philosopher" is turned into ridicule in appropriate Rabbinical fashion.

The Story of
the Bribed
"Philos-
opher."

"Imma Shalom, the wife of R. Eliezer and sister of Rabban Gamaliel, had a philosopher as a neighbour, who had the reputation of taking no bribe. They wished to render him ridiculous. Imma accordingly brought him a golden candle-stick, presented herself before him and said: 'I should like to have a share in the property of my family.' The philosopher answered her: 'Then have thy share!' But Gamaliel said to him: 'We have the law: where there is a son, the daughter shall inherit naught.' The philosopher said: 'Since the day when ye were driven out of your country, the Law of Moses is repealed and there is given the Gospel, in which it is said: Son and daughter shall inherit together.'

"On the next day Gamaliel brought the philosopher a Libyan ass. Then the philosopher said to them: 'I, the Gospel, am not come to do away with the Law of Moses, but to add to the Law of Moses am I come. It is written in the Law of Moses: Where there is a son, the daughter shall not inherit.' Then Imma said to him: 'Nevertheless may thy light shine like the candle-stick.' But Rabban Gamaliel said: 'The ass is come and has overturned the candle-stick.'" ¹

Imma Shalom, or Aima Salome, was sister of the Patriarch R. Gamaliel II., and wife of Eliezer the Great, who is curiously enough supposed elsewhere to have

Date
Indications

¹ "Bab. Shabbath," 116 a and b.

had a leaning to Christianity. The word for Gospel is the Hebrew transliteration of *Evangelion*.

In the first place it is to be observed that according to our philosopher the year 70 A.D. ("since the day when ye were driven out of your country"), the date of the fall of Jerusalem, marked a period of the strongest possible differentiation between the Jew and Christian. It was this crushing blow to the national hopes, far more than the propaganda of Paul, which aided the spread of Christian and non-particularist ideas.

A Saying
from the
Gospel.

The main point, however, which interests us is the question of the quotations put into the mouth of the philosopher. The intention of the Rabbis appears to have been to show the inconsistency of the Christian position. You contend, said the Rabbis to those whom they regarded as trespassers on their sacred property, that the Gospel has not come to put an end to the Law, but only to complete it; but whatever you may say, it is practically making the Law as we have ever known it of none effect in your communities.

It is true that Christian tradition has preserved no trace of any saying to the effect that son and daughter should inherit together; but, if we are to take the Acts narrative as giving back a correct picture of what the author conceived the first communities to have been, as the early Christian had all things in common and gave their all to the common fund, this would practically amount to setting aside the Law as the Rabbis understood it, for it was an entire upsetting of the whole social organisation of Jewry.

The Personi-
fied Gospel.

But what is most curious is the wording: "I, the Gospel, am not come to do away with the Law of

Moses." This saying is preserved in our present canonical text by the writer of the first Gospel from his second main source as: "Think not that I came to destroy the Law and the Prophets; I came not to destroy, but to complete."¹ This saying, as the teller of our Talmud story will have it, the philosopher found at the end of his Gospel, meaning by this evidently a book. If there were nothing more to be said, we might dismiss the story as devoid of all historical basis, and consider it solely as a Haggada devised to preserve a controversial point. But the curious personification of the Gospel in the second quotation reminds us of an equally strange personification found in the tradition of the Gnostic Basilides at the beginning of the second century. For Basilides the Gospel was a living entity, a "Person" by whom the whole soteriology of his system was engineered. Can it therefore be possible that in one of the many traditions of the early days there was a document where the "Gospel," the personified Glad-tidings, was substituted for the teacher, or even stood so originally among circles where the message was thought more of than the messenger? Moreover we have similar personifications in Gnostic tradition; for instance, in the MS. of Marcus (who flourished a generation later than Basilides), to which we have already referred, the Tetras, Quaternatio or Quaternitas, the "Colarbasic" Silence,² is the inspiring intelligence of the Gnosis.

¹ Matt. v. 17.

² Irenæus, "Adv. Hær.," I. xiv. 1. This "Colarbasic" Silence, of which Marcus said he was the "receptacle," was a great puzzle to the worthy Church Fathers in their heresy-hunting, so much so that they eventually made of it a heresy derived from an arch-

Of course the personification of the Gospel in our Talmud sentence may be sufficiently accounted for as a natural creation of the vivid oriental imagination, but we should hardly expect it from the side of the Rabbis in this connection, and, as a matter of fact, it *is* found in Christian tradition.

Another point of great interest is that the Christian in this story is styled a "philosopher," and was therefore regarded as a learned man.

Some more
Minim
Passages.

We have now exhausted all the Talmud passages collected by Dalman, and will next turn to a few additional ones found in the far shorter collection, or rather selection, of Levene,¹ who takes Minim in all the following passages to mean Jewish Christians.

I have arranged these passages as far as I can according to their chronological indications, and the first of them runs as follows :

The Curse on
the Minim.

"Rabban Gamaliel, whilst presiding at the academical Sanhedrin, said to the sages: Is there any one present who is able to compose a blessing [? curse] for Minim? Then Samuel the Little came forward and composed it:

"To the apostates let there be no hope; then shall all the wickedness perish in a moment, and all Thine enemies speedily shall be cut off, and the kingdom of pride Thou shalt uproot speedily, and break and cast

heretic of their own imagination called Colarbasus. As a matter of fact, *Cholarba* in Hebrew means simply "All-four," that is, the divine Tetrad or Tetractys.

¹ It must, however, be stated that Levene does not translate literally; he frequently shortens and paraphrases, as may be seen by comparison of his translation of the passages he gives in common with Dalman or Laible.

down, and humble it speedily in our day. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, breaker of the enemy, and humbler of the proud."

Rabbi Samuel the Little belonged to the first generation of Tanaim and flourished about 90-130 A.D.; R. Gamaliel II. flourished about 90-110 A.D.

"At the death of Joshua Ben Chanania the Rabbis cried out: Who will now defend our cause against the Minim?"²

R. Joshua Ben Chanania was one of the most famous Rabbis of Israel and flourished about 70-130 A.D. It is remarkable that in the Talmud tradition he is often found in controversy with R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, and this confirms the sense of our passage that he was regarded as one of the greatest champions of Jewish orthodoxy, for, as we have seen, Eliezer was suspected of sympathy with Christian views.

"The Tanaic Rabbis have taught: When Rabbis Minoth. Eliezer Ben Pardo and Chanena ben Teradion were seized on the charge of being Christians [*minoth*], Rabbi Eliezer said to Chanena ben Teradion: Happy be thou, O Chanena, for thou hast been seized on one charge, but woe to me that I have been seized for five offences. But Rabbi Chanena answered: Happy be thou, O Eliezer, for thou hast been seized on five charges and hast escaped³; but woe to me that I have been charged with one offence, and have not escaped. Thou hast been engaged in the study of the Law and in charity, whilst I engaged only in the study of the Law—therefore punishment has overtaken me."⁴

¹ "Berachoth," 29a.

² "Bab. Chagiga," 5a.

³ Levene adds: "from Christian influence."

⁴ "Aboda Zara," 16b.

Eleazar ben Perata and Chanania (not Chanina) ben Teradion flourished about 100–135; the latter was one of the “ten martyrs” who lost their lives in the Bar Kochba rebellion. The story is somewhat curious, even from a Jewish point of view, for Ben Teradion was above all others specially noted for his charity.¹

“A certain Min asked Rabbi Chanena: Now that your temple is burnt, you cannot cleanse yourselves from your ceremonial defilement; you are, therefore, unclean, for it is written [Lam. i. 9]: ‘Her filthiness abides in her skirts.’ But Rabbi Chanena answered: Come and see what is written concerning them [the Jews]: ‘Who remaineth among them in the midst of defilement’ [Lam. xvi. 16].²

This R. Chanena is probably intended for Chanania ben Teradion, a Palestinian Rabbi who, as we have seen, flourished about 100–135 A.D.

The Books of
the Minim.

“The books of the Minim³ are not to be kept from the fire on the Sabbath, but must be consumed on the spot with the names of God contained therein.

“Rabbi Joses said: On a week day let the names of God be cut out and hidden away, and the remainder burnt. Rabbi Tarphon declared: May I be deprived of my children if I do not burn them with the names of God!

“If a man be pursued to death by a robber, or by a serpent, let him fly for refuge into a heathen temple

¹ See Hamburger, “Real-Encyclopädie des Judenthums,” “Talmud und Midrash,” ii. 132, *sub voce*.

² “Yoma,” 57a. Levene adds: “That is to say, even when Israel is defiled the Shekinah dwells among them.”

³ Levene adds: “the Gospels of the Christians.”

rather than into the house of a Min; for idolaters sin unwittingly, but the Minim do so deliberately.

“Rabbi Ishmael said: If in order to make peace between husband and wife, the Law allows the name of God to be ‘blotted out,’¹ how much more shall the books of these men be destroyed who stir up enmity and angry feeling between Israel and their Father who is in heaven. To them the words of David may be applied: ‘Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? Am I not grieved with those who rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred, I reckon them my enemies.’”²

Here we see that not even the strict observance of the Sabbath was to stand in the way of the instant destruction of the Siphre Minim; nay, the terrible profanity of destroying the names of God which were thought to give the material on which they were inscribed a special and inviolable sanctity, was set on one side, and this not only on the Sabbath, when the cutting of them out might be held to entail “work,” but, according to R. Tarphon, even on week days.

R. Jose (ben Chalaphtha) belonged to the third generation of Tanaim, and flourished about 130–160 A.D.; he was a great enemy of mysticism. R. Tarphon belonged to the preceding generation, 90–130 A.D.; he was a fierce opponent of Christianity, as indeed our passage shows. R. Ishmael ben Elisha was a contemporary of R. Tarphon and R. Akiba.

It is to be noticed, however, that Friedländer, in his

¹ Levene comments: “to be placed in the bitter waters.”

² “Shabbath,” 116a.

Friedländer
on "Minim."

"Vorbemerkung," makes the opening words of this passage, which he gives as "the Giljonim and books of the Minim," the basis of his interesting essay on pre-Christian Jewish Gnosticism.¹ He denies that the Giljonim are the Gospels of the Christians, and that the Minim of the oldest Talmud tradition are Christians. He tells us that in Galicia, where old-fashioned Talmudism is still to be found in its most conservative form, the traditional interpretation of Min is that "Min is an Apikores," that is, an Epicuræan, a sceptic, an atheist, a "philosopher who despises God and his Law." His own theory is that by Min is meant, at any rate in the earlier deposits of the Talmud, "an antinomistic Gnostic," that is, presumably a Gnostic who set aside the traditional Jewish view, and contended that the Yahweh of the Jews was at best a secondary God. Friedländer is well worth reading, but a consideration of his arguments would necessitate more space than the treatment of our present subject will permit. The question of a pre-Christian Jewish Gnosticism, however, is one of the points of the greatest importance in a consideration of Christian origins.²

Weinstein on
"Minim."

Weinstein has also quite recently returned to the subject³ and further developed his contention in his essay

¹ Friedländer (M.), "Der vorchristliche jüdische Gnosticismus" (Göttingen ; 1898).

² See also "Die jüdische Gnosis und die platonisch-pythagoräischen Anschauungen der palästinischen Lehrer," in M. Joël's "Blicke in die Religionsgeschichte zu Anfang des zweiten christlichen Jahrhunderts" (Breslau ; 1880), i. 114-170.

³ Weinstein (N. I.), "Zur Genesis der Agada : Beitrag zur Entstehungs- und Entwicklungs-Geschichte des talmudischen Schriftthums" (Göttingen ; 1901), Theil II. "Die alexandrinische Agada," "Die Minim," pp. 91-156.

on the Essenes,¹ that by Minim in the Talmud we are nowhere to understand Jewish Christians, but that the chief characteristic of Minism from pre-Christian times is always polytheism; in brief, all non-monotheism without distinction was Minism, and that, too, not in the sense of idolatry but for the most part under such high forms of belief as the Logos-theory.

Much work, however, remains to be done by such Talmud specialists as Joël, Friedländer, Weinstein and their co-labourers before we are quite sure of the exact value of this very general term, and first of all we require a complete list of Talmud passages where the term occurs; meantime we return to the passages which Levene considers to refer specially to the Christians.

"A man must not carry or take from the Minim, he must not intermarry with them, and must not accept their cures for disease."²

Boycott of
Minim.

Then follows the story of Ben Dama's being bitten by a snake, with which we have already dealt.

"The post-Mishnaic Rabbis have taught: An animal, if slaughtered, even according to the Jewish rites, by a Min, is like an animal offered to idols. His (the Min's) bread is like the bread of a Cuthite (Samaritan) and his wine like that offered to idols. The books of the Law, the Prophets and the Hagiographa which have been written by him, are like the books of magicians."³

Impurity of
Minim.

Here we have a Min who observes all the Jewish legal prescriptions as to food, and yet falls under the utmost displeasure of the Rabbis. His food and his copies of the Scriptures, even of the Torah, are

¹ "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Essäer" (Wien; 1892).

² "Aboda Zara," 27b.

³ "Chullin," 13a.

polluted and contaminate as do food offered to idols and books of sorcerers. This Min then must have been regarded as doctrinally and therefore spiritually impure; but there were evidently also Minim who did not observe the Jewish prescriptions, otherwise the sentence "even according to the Jewish rites"¹ would be meaningless. This passage accordingly seems as though it would somewhat upset Weinstein's theory. The post-Mishnaic Rabbis may be dated from the third century onwards.

Minim compared with
Tax-gatherers.

"Mark Ukvah said: The voice of two daughters who cry from Gehenna are they who exclaim, 'Give, give!'—in this world, namely Roman tax-collectors and Minim.² None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the path of life. A speedy death awaits those who return to Judaism from Christianity [*? minoth*], for they expire from remorse."³

Mar Ukbah was in all probability Chief of the Exile, or Prince of the Captivity, in Babylonia about 210–240 A.D.

The Rolls of
the Law
written by
Minim to be
Destroyed.

"Rav Nachman said: We hold that a roll of the Law that has been written by a Min shall be committed to the flames; if by a Gentile, let it be concealed; if found in the possession of a Min, and it cannot be ascertained whether he has transcribed it, let it be concealed; if found in the possession of a Gentile, some say let it likewise be concealed, others, that it may be used for reading."⁴

¹ If it stands so literally in the original.

² Levene translates "Christians" and adds, "The former shouts, 'Give taxes'; the latter, 'Give converts.'"

³ Levene gives no reference to this saying.

⁴ "Gittin," 45b.

Rabbi Nachman was rector of the school at Nehardea in Babylonia, and lived 245-320 A.D. A Min was then presumably a born Jew; whether or not proselytes were included is uncertain.

"Rabbi Abahu said: The Shema¹ was commanded to be repeated in a loud voice on account of the troubles caused by the Minim, but at Nehardea in Babylon, where there are no Minim, they repeat the Shema to-day in a low voice."²

The Shema
and the
Minim.

R. Abbahu belonged to the third generation of the Palestinian Amoraim, and flourished 279-320 A.D. He was a great opponent of all Minim, and especially of Christians, as we have already seen above.

"Rav Saiseth, who was totally blind, ordered his servant to place him in any other but the eastward direction when he wished to pray, because the Minim did so."³

The Minim
and the East-
ward Direc-
tion.

R. Shesheth belonged to the third generation of Babylonian Amoraim, and flourished about 300-330 A.D. It is difficult to believe that *all* Minim turned to the east in prayer; but we know that the Essenes and the Therapeuts did so. Was this a general custom of the early Christians also?

We have now come to the end of Levene's quotations, but we are quite certain that the subject is by no means exhausted, as a glance at the Talmud passages cited by the authorities we have already referred to, or at the lives of the most renowned Rabbis as given in Hamburger's "Real - Encyclopädie," will show.

¹ The prayer beginning, "Hear, O Israel."

² "Pesachim," 56a.

³ "Baba Bathra," 25a.

The Importance of the Talmud for the Study of Christian Origins.

It is a matter of capital importance for students of Christian origins that without delay the Talmud should be minutely scrutinized from the first to the last page, so as to unearth every scrap of information bearing directly or indirectly on the many phases of early Christianity, but this is a task that none but the most competent Talmud specialists, who are also exceedingly well read in all the latest research into the puzzling chaos of the early schools and "heresies" with which Christianity was inextricably mingled in the first centuries, can hope to achieve with any measure of success.

We next pass on to a consideration of such of the contents of the Toldoth Jeschu as bear in any way upon our enquiry; but first of all we must inform ourselves concerning the history of these strange Toldoth.

XIII.—THE TOLDOTH JESCHU.

WE have already seen in our short sketch of "The Talmud in History" how fierce was the persecution of Western Jewry by Christian intolerance in the Inquisitional period of the Middle Ages; we have seen how hate begat hate, and we are not surprised to find that the Jews of the later Middle Age had long learned most bitterly to execrate the memory of their ancient Rabbi, in whose name they had been so cruelly persecuted for so many centuries. The name of Jesus had become a terror to them, the symbol of all that was cruel, even as from the earliest days it had connoted for them much that was blasphemous—cruel because of their tortures and stripes, blasphemous because his followers worshipped man as God, and the Law most sternly forbade the Jew to do so.

Causes of
Hatred.

But the fierce outbreak which raged with such disastrous results to Jewry from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century was no new conflagration. The ancient fire of the early days of conflict had never been really extinguished; it had smouldered on, ready to burst into flame as soon as Western Christendom in the person of one or two scholars—aided, as the Christian would say, by the zeal of Jewish converts, or, as the

Israelite would put it, roused to fury by the sectarian hatred of Jewish renegades and apostates—had either learned enough Hebrew to read the Talmud traditions about Jesus, or had had its ears filled with accounts so distorted that it imagined that the Talmud was from the first to the last page a repository of blasphemy against its Lord.

The Inquisition knows
Little of the
Toldoth.

In this connection it is somewhat curious to note that the rage of the Christian inquisitors was directed almost entirely against the Talmud itself, from the voluminous contents of which it was a matter of some difficulty to disinter the brief and scattered references to Jesus, while we hear comparatively little or nothing of a certain Jewish "Life of Jesus," which not only worked up some of the scattered Talmud passages into a connected whole, but also added other matter (not found in the Talmud), some of the elements of which were referred to by Tertullian as early as the closing years of the second century.

It is true that at the very beginning of the Talmud persecution, about the middle of the thirteenth century, we find Raymund Martini, the learned Dominican who has the distinction of being considered the first Christian Hebraist of the Middle Ages, but who is thought by some to have been a converted Jew,¹ quoting a form of this "Life," which had in all probability been already expressly condemned at the trial preceding the Paris burning of 1248.² Again, in

¹ Martini sat on the Talmud Inquisitorial Commission assembled at Barcelona in 1266.

² Lea (H. C.), "A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages" (New York ; 1888), i. 558.

1415, the Antipope Benedict XIII. specially singled out for condemnation a certain treatise "Mar mar Jesu," no copy of which is now known to be extant, but which is thought by some to have been a form of the Toldoth Jeschu,¹ while in the first half of the sixteenth century, when the Talmud was recovering its right to existence, Reuchlin distinctly excluded this "Life" from his favourable judgment on the Talmud.

It is, however, strange that we do not hear more of the Toldoth Jeschu during this period, for it worked up into one consecutive narrative not only the main Talmud Jeschu data, but also much else not found either in the Talmud or in Christian tradition either canonical or apocryphal, and might, therefore, have been expected to have been singled out especially and consistently by the emissaries of the Inquisition as the main ground of their accusation and attack. Can it have been that this "Life" was considered by the ignorant inquisitors as forming part and parcel of the Talmud itself; or was it kept so secret among the Jews that the agents of the Holy Office failed to come across it except on the rarest occasions; or was it to the bitter persecution of the Inquisition itself that we owe not the genesis of the Toldoth, but the elaboration of some of its existing forms?

The fact that we found Tertullian briefly referring to certain elements still preserved in great elaboration in nearly all extant forms of the Toldoth convinced us that, as far as these elements were concerned, the traditional memory of the mediæval compilers or redactors of the Toldoth reached back to at least the end

Suggested
Reasons for
this Silence.

The Paucity
of Material.

¹ Grätz (H. H.), "Geschichte der Juden" (Leipzig; 1865, 2nd ed.), viii. 133-135.

of the second century. But the difficulties connected with the subject were (and are) very great; for not only were all non-Jewish scholars who had considered the matter agreed that the forms of the Toldoth accessible to them were worthless mediæval fabrications quite beneath the notice of the historical student, but the number of these recensions was very small. In fact, for all practical purposes the short thirteenth century Latin translation of Raymund Martini, the seventeenth and eighteenth century Latin versions of Wagenseil and Huldreich, and finally the Judæo-German "Life" published by Bischoff in 1895,¹ comprised all the material available.

Recent Publication of New Material.

In his "Vorwort," Bischoff had stated that this "jüdisch-deutsch" "Life" was the forerunner of a large work "Das jüdische 'Leben Jesu,'" which was to deal with the various recensions of the Toldoth in a scientific manner. We were therefore waiting in high expectation of the help of this most useful undertaking, when a few months ago (at the time of this writing) there appeared an excellent work on the subject by Dr. Samuel Krauss, enriched with many notes from the hand of Bischoff himself, and also with others by Strack.² It is, therefore, to be supposed that this is the book referred to by Bischoff in his "Foreword," and not, as we had previously imagined, that the work promised was to be entirely by himself.

¹ Bischoff (E.), "Ein jüdisch-deutsches Leben Jesu : Geschichte Jesu von Nazareth, geboren im Jahre 3760 seit Erschaffung der Welt" (Leipzig ; no date).

² Krauss (S.). "Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen" (Berlin ; 1902).

Most opportunely, then, for our enquiry has this study appeared, for in it not only have we a wealth of new material which was hitherto entirely inaccessible to any but the most determined specialists, but also we have the first attempt at a scientific and unpartisan treatment of this difficult subject; a beginning has at last been made towards an evaluation of the legendary and traditional materials of this most curious cycle of Jewish literature, and the openmindedness of the undertaking is unquestionably shown by the fact that Krauss, Bischoff and Strack frequently dissent from each other in their comments and recommendations.

Our present task is, therefore, considerably lightened; for instead of attempting unaided to review this overgrown and complicated tradition as preserved in Bischoff's Judæo-German Toldoth and the Latin versions of Wagenseil, Huldreich and Raymundus Martini, and to trace the external evidence from where we left it, in treating of the Talmud, we have to work over ground already surveyed by Krauss, while at the same time we have to thank him for considerably widening the area of research by the addition of new territory which we could never have traversed at all without his aid, for no one but a past-master in a knowledge of Hebrew and Jewish Hebrew mediæval literature could dream of attempting such a task single-handed. If, however, we find ourselves compelled sometimes to differ from Krauss' conclusions or to put a different value on some of the chief elements in the materials, it is not surprising, seeing that the scientific investigation of this very obscure subject of hitherto bitterest prejudice is still entirely in its infancy.

Krauss'
"Leben."

His Estimate
of the
Toldoth.

Krauss, in his "Einleitung," assures us of his entire impartiality, and declares that he has treated the Toldoth purely as an ancient literary monument, the earliest foundation of which, he believes, preserves a text reaching back some 1500 years (K. iii.).¹ As the result of his labours, in which he claims to have proved the general Toldoth tradition point for point, he declares that though the representation of the "Life of Jesus" contained therein is of an odious nature, and in so far referable to Jewish hostility, nevertheless the bare facts themselves are for the most part in contact with good, and that, too, Christian, sources; and that instead of spending all its energies in abusing the Toldoth as a Jewish lampoon, a pitiful fabrication, or execrable foolishness, it would be more profitable for Christian theology to trace the book to its sources, as he has endeavoured to do himself (K. 2).

"Good
Christian
Sources."

When, however, Krauss speaks of "good Christian sources," it must be understood that he means that they were "good" for the Jewish compilers of the Toldoth, who could not be expected to distinguish between canonical, deutero-canonical and apocryphal Christian literature and tradition. The Toldoth makers and redactors simply reflected the general notions in the Christian folk-consciousness of their times, and took these varied and changing notions indifferently for authentic facts, or, at any rate, as valid beliefs of the Christian faithful. Thus we find biblical, apocryphal and Talmud-Midrash traditions and legends as to Jesus

¹ The frequent references to Krauss' work are thus signified; when the note referred to is by Bischoff it will be further marked "B. n."

mingled together in motley confusion, each and every one of them being put at precisely the same value (K. 165). And this indeed is an important point in any investigation of a subject of this nature; for the common persuasion in general Protestant circles that the canonical Gospel view was the only view, even in the early days, is entirely mistaken; the people fed mainly on apocrypha.

Krauss especially insists that the agreement of the Toldoth in certain of its forms and features with Gospel data is of prime importance, for it argues that although in the Toldoth literature these are naturally put forward as they appeared to Jewish, and, therefore, he admits, biassed observers, they are nevertheless not deliberately distorted or disfigured (K. 154). The Toldoth recensions, it is true, bear all the marks of an apologetic and polemical literature, but this does not calumniate; it alleges, but does not execrate (K. 155).

Bischoff, on the contrary, declares that the various forms of the Toldoth must be classed as a satirical and parodial literature of a polemical nature; it is true that the Jewish compilers borrow certain *traits* from the Christian prototype, but only to recast them in their own fashion. The various Toldoth recensions known to us all bear the marks of a Middle Age bitter polemical literature against the intolerance of the Catholic Church and in answer to the fierce denunciation and cruel persecution by the Christians against the Jews; it is a case of eye for eye and tooth for tooth. These writings were pamphlets against the simple faith in unintelligent authority and the foolishness of a rank growth of Christian legend and folklore; briefly, against

Bischoff's
View.

the pretensions and extravagances of the Church of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless it would be foolish to throw away the child with the bath water, for the Toldoth writers were, in their way, as decent folk as their opponents (K. 154; B. n.).

With this opinion Strack also is in agreement; nevertheless Krauss holds firmly to his own point of view and refuses to modify it. The most useful standpoint may perhaps be found somewhere between these two contradictory views, but as far as our present study is concerned, our main interest is concerned only with the oldest elements discernible under the many changing forms of this Toldoth activity.

Only one
Source of
Information
in English.

But perhaps some of our readers will say: Why, we did not know even so much as that there was a Jewish Life of Jesus; where can we obtain any information on the subject in English? Truth to say, the Toldoth literature has been boycotted even by the learned in English-speaking lands. Perhaps this may have been natural enough, and it may have been best hitherto to keep silence on a topic which in the past could not possibly have been discussed with moderation. But at the beginning of the twentieth century it is no longer possible to exclude from the field of research into Christian origins any subject, even of apparently the most intractable kind, which may hold out the faintest hope of throwing even a sidelight on the countless obscurities of received tradition.

As far as we are aware there is only one book in English which deals with the subject, and that too in a very superficial manner, but as it has never reached a second edition, either it has been very little

read or the author has not thought it advisable to reprint it.¹

But even the learned have been hitherto very imperfectly acquainted with the Toldoth literature, and have had to depend entirely on polemical sources of information rather than on a scientific statement and appreciation of the facts. Setting aside Raymundus Martini's thirteenth century Latin rendering of a short Toldoth form, which Luther knew from the fifteenth century reproduction of Porchettus, and translated into German early in the sixteenth century, and which we shall consider later on, non-Jewish scholars had until quite lately to depend entirely on the translations of the anti-Jewish writers Wagenseil²

General
Literature.

¹ Baring-Gould (S.), "The Lost and Hostile Gospels: An Essay on the Toldoth Jeschu, and the Petrine and Pauline Gospels of the First Three Centuries of which Fragments Remain" (London; 1874), ch. v. "The Counter-Gospels," pp. 67-115. This book contains a digest and partial translation of Wagenseil's seventeenth-century and Huldreich's eighteenth-century Latin versions of the Toldoth; much of the matter in the chapters on the Talmud and Toldoth is taken from Clemens' "Jesus von Nazareth" (Stuttgart; 1850) and von der Alm's "Urtheile" (Leipzig; 1864), whose name the author misspells, p. 48—but without any acknowledgment.

Wagenseil's Latin has also been rendered into English in a penny pamphlet form, "The Hebrew Account of our Lord (sole English edition, omitting nothing after the first page), Latinized by J. C. Wagenseil, 1681; Englished by E. L. G., 1885." (London; James Burns.) It is difficult to refrain from reprobatng strongly a production of this kind.

² Joh. Christophorus Wagenseilius, "Tela ignea Satanæ. Hoc est: Arcani et horribiles Judæorum adversus Christum Deum et Christianam Religionem Libri ἀνεκδοτοι" (Altdorf; 1681), 2 vols., containing six treatises, of which the last is "Libellus Toldos Jeschu." W.'s text was reproduced with a German translation in J. A. Eisenmenger's (not Eilenmenger's) "Entdecktes Juden-

(b. at Nürnberg Nov. 26, 1633, d. Oct. 9, 1705) and Huldreich.¹

Extent of New
Material.

With the publication of Bischoff's Jewish-German "Leben Jesu" in 1895, to which we have already referred, and Krauss' larger work in 1902, however, we have a large amount of new material rendered accessible to us; not, however, that even so we have by any means all the material extant, for there must be still numerous MSS. hidden away (for a number of MSS. once known to exist have since disappeared), or in the hands of modern Jewish mediævalists, the "homely" Jews of Krauss (p. 22); and of the 23 (two of these being only fragments) now known we have still to wait for the translation of a good half of them. Nevertheless, as the MSS. fall into types, the portion of the new material which Krauss has translated is doubtless sufficient for all practical purposes.

Bischoff's
Classification.

Bischoff (K. 27-37) has divided these MSS. into five chief types; it is, however, to be observed that these groupings do not in the remotest fashion aim at any attempt at tracing out a historical genealogical tree, for, thum" (1st ed. [Frankfort], 1700; latest edition, Dresden, 1893, by J. X. Schiefel); the original title of which ran: "Das bei 40 Jahr von der Judenschafft mit Arrest bestrickt gewesene, nunmehr aller durch Autorität eines Hohen Reichs-Vicariats relaxirte J. A. E's . . . entdecktes Judenthum: oder gründlicher und wahrhafter Bericht, welchergestalt die verstockte Juden die Hochheilige Dreieinigkeit . . . erschrecklicher Weise lästern und verunehren u. s. w., 2 Thle; and also by Bullet, *op. sub. cit.*

¹ Joh. Jac. Huldricus, "Sepher Toldoth Jeschua ha-Notzri [in Hebrew letters], Historia Jeschuæ Nazareni, a Judæis blasphemè corrupta, ex Manuscripto hactenus inedito nunc demum edita, ac Versione et Notis (quibus Judæorum nequitie proprius deteguntur, et Authoris asserta ineptiæ ac impietatis convincuntur), illustrata" (Leyden; 1705).

as Bischoff says, in face of the very chaotic nature of the material, such an attempt must ever be of the most subjective character (K. 27). It may be that with the discovery of other MSS. something of a more objective nature may be attempted, but at present the field is wide open for the most diverse speculations.

Bischoff's classification, or, rather, tentative grouping, of the MSS. is as follows:

1. Type Wagenseil; put first because it is the best known (9 MSS.).

2. Type De Rossi (so called from its last private owner, who presented it to the Royal Library at Parma); placed second because it is more nearly allied to the former type in its main subjects (6 MSS.).

3. Type Huldreich (the original is lost, but there are 2 MSS. copied from H.'s printed text); put third because it was printed next after W.'s.

4. Type Modern Slavonic; put next because it shows a knowledge of all the foregoing (4 MSS.).

5. Type Cairo (6 fragments in the Schechter-Oxford-collection from the Geniza or lumber-room of the Old Synagogue at Cairo); put last because it is the last known.

Of printed Toldoth texts we have practically only Printed Texts. those of Wagenseil and Huldreich; there was, however, still earlier, somewhere about 1640 (K. 17; B. n.), a text published by Engelsberger, but no copy of it is now known to exist; there is also mixed Toldoth stuff in the ironical composition of Gustav (Gerschom) Bader, which bears as part of its title "History of the Nazarene Law-giver."

Krauss' New
Texts.

None of these texts, however, have the slightest pretension of being critical; they are all, so to speak, one-manuscript texts. It remained for Krauss to give us the first attempt at a critical text of (1) the Strassburg University Library MS., and (2) the Vienna Israelitish Theological Academy's MS. No. 54; while he has had simply to reproduce (3) Adler's Jemen MS. with portions of (4) the Leyden MS.¹ dealing with the "burial" and "resurrection"; (5) of three Slavonic MSS. dealing with the "seduction"; (6) a fragment from Bokhara in possession of E. Adler, dealing also with the "seduction"; (7, the "inventio crucis" from the Vienna MS. No. 54; (8) the Cairo Geniza fragments; and (9) an extract from the "Touch-stone" of Schemtob ibn Schaprut, from the MS. in the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau (p. 180). Of these texts Krauss gives German translations of only 1, 2, 3 and 9.

It is to be regretted that when the subject was being treated in a scientific manner, Krauss did not think of bringing together all the material between two covers; it would have been vastly more convenient if Wagenseil's Huldreich's and Bischoff's texts, and Martini's version, had been printed as well, and a German translation appended for every text; even if the "embellishments" of the Slavonic type are too bad for translation into German, they might have been rendered into Latin.

These MSS. are all late, and as far as we have any indications of date, two may be assigned to the sixteenth

¹ So the heading, p. 128, but I can find no mention of a "Leyden" MS. in either K.'s description of MSS. (pp. 19-22) or in B.'s (pp. 27-37).

century, two to the seventeenth, two to the seventeenth-eighteenth, four to the eighteenth, and five to the nineteenth century.

The question of the language of the various forms of Language. the Toldoth is often very obscure, but Krauss is of opinion that in German-speaking lands at any rate, and therefore also in Slavonic-speaking lands, the Toldoth recensions were first written in the vernacular, being intended as a "Volkslectüre"; they were only later translated into Hebrew, and as this Hebrew is often very impure, they were probably translated by apostates or by Christian opponents for polemical purposes. This view is, however, sharply contradicted by Bischoff (K. 9-12 and 13; B. n's.), who declares that instead of the vernacular Toldoth being intended for popular consumption, they rather constituted the reading of the intelligent Jewish laity, by which we are to understand, presumably, those who were unable to read the Toldoth in Hebrew. Bischoff denies that the Toldoth Hebrew is worse than much of the literature of the time, and it is difficult to see *à priori* why an apostate should not have been able to write as good Hebrew as a non-convert.

It seems, however, highly probable that the language of the oldest forms of the Toldoth was originally Aramaic, as the oldest MS. fragments extant (from the Cairo Geniza) show.

As to the title by which the various forms of the Jewish Life of Jesus is designated, we have chosen the best known one, and the one that occurs most frequently. The known titles, however, vary very considerably. Titles. "Toldoth Jeschu" means literally The Genera-

tions of Jeschu, hence Birth or History, Tradition, or Life of Jesus. It is also called "Sepher Toldoth Jeschu," or Book of the Generations of Jeschu; also "Toldoth Jeschu ha-Notzri" (K. 30), or History of Jeschu the Nazarene. We also find the title "Maase Jeschu," or History of Jeschu (K. 30), or "Maase Jeschu ha-Notzri" (K. 31, 33). It is also supposed that the Latin transliteration, "Mar mar Jesu," in the Bull of May 1415, stands for "Maase Jeschu," or "Mañnar Jeschu," Story of Jeschu. We also meet with the title "Maase Tola," or "Talui," The History of the Hanged (K. 9, 13); also The History of Jeschu and of Queen Helena and of the Apostles (K. 15), or simply History of Jeschu and the Apostles (K. 172). One MS. begins: "This is the Book of the Condemnation of Jeschu ben Pandera" (K. 10); another bears the title The History of him and his Son¹ (K. 33, 64, 88). Huldreich's printed text, after the main title, "Toldoth Jeschua ha-Notzri," continues with the names Jeschu and Cristos [*sic*] Jesus (in Hebrew transliteration).

The Name
Jeschu.

As to the Hebrew equivalent for the name Jesus, we find that the Toldoth recensions amply confirm the form given in the Talmud with which we have already dealt; in fact, the longer form Jeschua is found in only three MSS.,² while the still longer form Jehoshua appears only once, in Wagenseil.

¹ Meaning, presumably, "History of Joseph Pandera and his Son," for in this recension J. Pandera is given as the legitimate husband of Miriam.

² But even in these MSS. this form does not appear throughout, or more frequently than Jeschu or Jesus (in Hebrew transliteration from the—? German).

But before we go any further we must present our readers with some one of the numerous recensions of the Toldoth, so that they may form some idea of the general nature of the material. As the Wagenseil and Huldreich versions are fairly well known, at any-rate to scholars and the curious, we will take the recension preserved in the Strassburg MS., which is of special interest not only because it is probably the Hebrew original underlying the type of text preserved in Bischoff's Yiddish Toldoth, but also because it preserves many Aramaic traces, and so connects itself with the earliest forms of the Toldoth literature, and finally because part of it is identical with Martini's thirteenth century text.

XIV.—A JEWISH LIFE OF JESUS.

The
Seduction.

1. THE beginning of the birth of Jeschu. His mother was Miriam [a daughter] of Israel. She had a betrothed of the royal race of the House of David, whose name was Jochanan. He was learned in the law and feared heaven greatly. Near the door of her house, just opposite, dwelt a handsome [fellow]; Joseph ben Pandera cast his eye upon her.

It was at night, on the eve of the Sabbath, when drunken he crossed over to her door and entered in to her. But she thought in her heart that it was her betrothed Jochanan; she hid her face and was ashamed. . . . He embraced her; but she said to him: Touch me not, for I am in my separation. He took no heed thereat, nor regarded her words, but persisted. She conceived by him. . . .

At midnight came her betrothed Rabbi Jochanan. She said to him: What meaneth this? Never hath it been thy custom, since thou wast betrothed to me, twice in a night to come to me.

He answered her and said: It is but once I come to thee this night.

She said to him: Thou camest to me, and I said to thee I was in my separation, yet heeded'st thou not, but

did'st thy will and wentest forth. When he heard this, forthwith he perceived that Joseph ben Pandera had cast an eye upon her and done the deed. He left her; in the morning he arose and went to Rabbi Simeon ben Shetach.

He said to him: Know then what hath befallen me this night with my betrothed. I went in to her after the manner of men . . .; before I touched her she said: Thou hast already this night come once to me, and I said to thee I was in my separation, and thou gavest no ear to me, [didst] thy will and wentest forth. When I heard such words from her, I left her and [went forth].

Rabbi Simeon ben Shetach said to him: Who came into thy mind?

He answered: Ben Pandera, for he dwelleth near her house and is a libertine.

He said to him: I understand that thou hast no witness for this thing, therefore keep silence; I counsel thee, if he have come once, then can he not fail to come a second time; act wisely; at that time set witnesses against him.

Some time after the rumour went abroad that Miriam was with child. Then said her betrothed Jochanan: She is not with child by me; shall I abide here and hear my shame every day from the people?

He arose and went to Babylon. After some [time she bore] a son, and they called his name Joshua after his mother's brother; but when his corrupt birth was made public they called him Jeschu.

2. His mother gave him to a teacher, so that he might become wise in the Halacha, and learned in the Torah and the Talmud. Now it was the custom of the

How the
Bastardy of
Jeschu was
made Public.

teachers of the law that no disciple and no boy should pass on his way by them without his head being covered and his eyes cast to the ground, from reverence of the pupils towards their teachers.

One day that rogue passed by, and all the wise were seated together at the door of the synagogue—that is, they called the school-house synagogue; that rogue then passed by the Rabbis, head on high and with uncovered pate, saluting no one, nay, rather, in shameless fashion showing irreverence to his teacher.

After he had passed by them, one of them began and said: He is a bastard (*mamzer*). The second began and said: He is a bastard and son of a woman in her separation (*mamzer ben ha-niddah*).

Another day the Rabbis stopped in tractate Nezikin¹; then began that one to speak Halachoth² before them.

Thereupon one of them began and said to him: Hast thou then not learned: He who giveth forth a Halacha in the presence of his teacher, is guilty of death?

That one answered and said to the wise ones: Who is the teacher and who the disciple? Who of the twain is wiser, Moses or Jethro? Was it not Moses, father of the prophets and head of the wise? And the Torah, moreover, beareth witness of him: And from henceforth there ariseth no prophet in Israel like unto Moses. Withal Jethro was an alien, . . . yet taught he Moses worldly wisdom, as it is written: Set thou over them rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds. But if

¹ The fourth Talmud order, "Damages," dealing with civil and criminal law.

² Decisions or rules of law.

ye say that Jethro is greater than Moses, then would there be an end to the greatness of Moses.

When the wise heard this, they said: As he is so very shameless, let us enquire after him. They sent to his mother, [saying] thus: Tell us, pray, who is the father of this boy?

She answered and said: . . ., but they say of him, that he is a bastard and son of a woman in her separation.

Then began Rabbi Simeon ben Shetach: To-day is it thirty years since Rabbi Jochanan her betrothed came to me; at that time he said to me: That and that hath befallen me.

He related all that is told above, . . . how Rabbi Simeon answered Rabbi Jochanan, and how when she was with child, he [R. J.] for great shame went to Babylon and did not return; but this Miriam gave birth to this Jeschu, and no death penalty awaits her, for she hath not done this of her own will, for Joseph ben Pandera laid in wait for her . . . the whole day.

When she heard from Rabbi Simeon that no death penalty awaited her, she also began and said: Thus was the story; and she confessed. But when it went abroad concerning Jeschu, that he was called a bastard and son of a woman in her separation, he went away and fled to Jerusalem.¹

3. Now the rule of all Israel was in the hand of a woman who was called Helene. And there was in the sanctuary a foundation-stone—and this is its interpretation: God founded it and this is the stone on

The Robbing
of the Shem.

¹ B.'s recension states that this enquiry took place at Tiberias in Galilee.

which Jacob poured oil—and on it were written the letters of the Shem,¹ and whosoever learned it, could do whatsoever he would. But as the wise feared that the disciples of Israel might learn them and therewith destroy the world, they took measures that no one should do so.

Brazen dogs were bound to two iron pillars at the entrance of the place of burnt offerings,² and whosoever entered in and learned these letters—as soon as he went forth again, the dogs bayed at him; if he then looked at them, the letters vanished from his memory.

This Jeschu came, learned them, wrote them on parchment, cut into his hip and laid the parchment with the letters therein—so that the cutting of his flesh did not hurt him—then he restored the skin to its place. When he went forth the brazen dogs bayed at him, and the letters vanished from his memory. He went home, cut open his flesh with his knife, took out the writing, learned the letters, went and gathered together three hundred and ten of the young men of Israel.

Jeschu claims
to be Messiah
and works
Miracles with
the Shem.

4. He said to them: Behold then these who say of me I am a bastard and son of a woman in her separation; they desire power for themselves and seek to exercise lordship in Israel. But see ye, all the prophets

¹ K.: "*Des erklärten Gottesnamens*," But *Shem ha-mephoresch* would perhaps be better rendered by the "ineffable name," that is, the name which ought not to be pronounced, the name of which only the consonants Y. H. V. H. are given, which are not pronounceable, but only indicate the pronunciation as known to the initiated. I use *Shem* throughout for the longer form *Shem ha-mephoresch*.

² Or rather, the door by which the burnt offerings were brought in.

prophesied concerning the Messiah of God, and I am the Messiah. Isaiah prophesied concerning me: Behold the virgin shall conceive, bear a son, and he shall be called Emanuel. Moreover, my forefather David prophesied concerning me and spake: The Eternal [Y. H. V. H.] said to me: Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. He begat me without male congress with my mother; yet they call me a bastard! He further prophesied: Why do the heathen rage, etc., the kings in the country rise up, etc., against His anointed. I am the Messiah, and they, so to rise up against me, are children of whores, for so it is written in the Scripture: For they are the children of whores.¹

The young men answered him: If thou art the Messiah, show unto us a sign. He answered them: What sign do ye require that I should do for you?

Forthwith they brought unto him a lame man, who had never yet stood upon his feet. He pronounced over him the letters, and he stood upon his feet. In the same hour they all made obeisance to him and said: This is the Messiah.

He gave them another sign. They brought to him a leper; he pronounced over him the letters, and he was healed. There joined themselves to him apostates from the children of his people.

When the wise saw that so very many believed on him, they seized him and brought him before Queen Helene, in whose hand the land of Israel was. They said to her: This man uses sorcery and seduces the world.

Jeschu answered to her as follows: Already of old

¹ A.V.: "children of whoredoms."

the prophets prophesied concerning me: And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Isai (Jesse), and I am he. Of him saith the Scripture: Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.

She said to them: Is this truly in your law, what he saith?

They answered: It is in our law; but it hath not been said concerning him, for it is said therein: And that prophet [etc.], put the evil away from the midst of thee. But the Messiah for whom we hope, with him are [other] signs, and it is said of him: He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth. With this bastard these signs are not present.

Jesus said: Lady, I am he, and I raise the dead.

In the same hour the queen was affrightened and said: That is a great sign.

Apostates still joined themselves to him, were with him, and there arose a great schism in Israel.

Jeschu's
Miracles in
Galilee.

5. Jeschu went to Upper Galilee. The wise assembled together, went before the queen and said to her: Lady, he practiseth sorcery and leadeth men astray therewith.

Therefore sent she forth horsemen concerning him, and they came upon him as he was seducing the people of Upper Galilee and saying to them: I am the Son of God, who hath been promised in your law. The horsemen rose up to take him away, but the people of Upper Galilee suffered it not and began to fight.

Jeschu said unto them: Fight not, have trust in the power of my Father in heaven.

The people of Galilee made birds out of clay; he uttered the letters of the Shem, and the birds flew

away. At the same hour they fell down before him.

He said to them: Bring unto me a millstone. They rolled it to the sea-shore; he spake the letters, set it upon the surface of the sea, sat himself thereon, as one sits in a boat, went and floated on the water.

They who had been sent, saw it and wondered; and Jeschu said to the horsemen: Go to your lady, tell her what ye have seen! Thereupon the wind raised him from the water and carried him onto the dry land.

The horsemen came and told the queen all these things; the queen was affrighted, was greatly amazed, sent and gathered together the elders of Israel and spake unto them: Ye say he is a sorcerer, nevertheless every day he doeth great wonders.

They answered her: Surely his tricks¹ should not trouble thee! Send messengers, that they may bring him hither, and his shame shall be made plain.

At the same hour she sent messengers, and his wicked company also joined itself onto him, and they came with him before the queen.

Then the wise men of Israel took a man by name Juda Ischariota, brought him into the Holy of Holies, where he learned the letters of the Shem, which were engraved on the foundation-stone, wrote them on a small [piece of] parchment, cut open his hip, spake the Shem, so that it did not hurt, as Jeschu had done before.

The Magic
Contest with
Judas.

As soon as Jeschu with his company had returned to the queen, and she sent for the wise men, Jeschu began and spake: For dogs encompassed me. And

¹ "*Sachen*."

concerning me he [David] said: Tremble not before them.

As soon as the wise men entered and Juda Ischariota with them, they brought forward their pleas against him, until he said to the queen: Of me it hath been said: I will ascend to heaven. Further it is written: If He take me, Sela! He raised his hands like unto the wings of an eagle and flew, and the people were amazed because of him: How is he able to fly twixt heaven and earth!

Then spake the wise men of Israel to Juda Ischariota: Do thou also utter the letters and ascend after him. Forthwith he did so, flew in the air, and the people marvelled: How can they fly like eagles!

Ischariota acted cleverly,¹ flew in the air, but neither could overpower the other, so as to make him fall by means of the Shem, because the Shem was equally with both of them. When Juda perceived this he had recourse to a low trick; he befouled Jeschu, so that he was made unclean and fell to the earth, and with him also Juda.

It is because of this that they wail on their night,² and because of the thing which Juda did to him.

Jeschu is con-
demned to
Death.

At the same hour they seized him and said to Helene: Let him be put to death! . . .³ Let him tell

¹ Text uncertain.

² Christmas. Weihnachten = Weinennachten, comments K. But if this word-play were intended, then the original of such a gloss in this recension was composed in German, and the Hebrew would be a translation from the German and not from Aramaic. But as the Hebrew text existed already in the thirteenth century, this does not seem probable.

³ Evidently a lacuna occurs here in the text. The text of Martini adds: "If he be the Son of God."

us who smote him. So they covered his head with a garment and smote him with a pomegranate staff. As he did not know,¹ it was clear that the Shem had abandoned him, and he was now fast taken in their hands.

He began and spake to his companions before the queen: Of me it was said: Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? But of them he said: The proud waters. And of them he said: Stronger than rocks make they their countenance.

When the queen heard this she reproved the apostates, and said to the wise men of Israel: He is in your hand.

6. They departed from the queen and brought him to the synagogue of Tiberias and bound him to the pillars of the ark. Then there gathered together the band of simpletons and dupes, who believed on his words and desired to deliver him out of the hand of the elders; but they could not do so, and there arose great fighting between them.

Jeschu is
rescued by his
Disciples.

When he saw that he had no power to escape, he said: Give me some water. They gave him vinegar in a copper vessel. He began and spake with a loud voice: Of me David prophesied and said: When I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.

On his head they set a crown of thorns. The apostates lamented sore, and there was fighting between them, brother with brother, father with son; but the wise men brought the apostates low.

¹ In another recension it is said that seventy elders with seventy staves of different woods smite him, and he is asked to say by whom and with what kind of staff he has been smitten, but he can tell neither the name of the smiter nor the wood of the staff.

He began and spake : Of me he prophesied and said : My back I gave to the smiters, etc. Further of these the Scripture saith : Draw hither, sons of the sorceress. And of me hath been said : But we held him, etc. And of me he said : The Messiah shall be cut off and he is not.

When the apostates heard this, they began to stone them with stones, and there was great hatred among them.

The Betrayal
of Jeschu.

Then were the elders afraid, and the apostates bore him off from them, and his three hundred and ten disciples brought him to the city of Antioch, where he sojourned till the rest-day of Passover. Now in that year Passover fell on the Sabbath, and he and his sons [*sic*] came to Jerusalem, on the rest-day of Passover, that is on the Friday, he riding on an ass and saying to his disciples : Of me it was said : Rejoice greatly, Daughter of Zion, etc.

In the same hour they all cried aloud, bowed themselves before him, and he with his three hundred and ten disciples went into the sanctuary.

Then came one of them, who was called Gaisa [that is, Gardener], and said to the wise men : Do you want the rogue ? They said : Where is he to be found ? He answered : He is in the sanctuary,—that is to say, in the school-house. They said to him : Show him unto us. He answered them : We, his three hundred and ten disciples, have already sworn by the commandments, that we will not say of him who he is ; but if ye come in the morning, give me the greeting,¹ and I

¹ That is the customary form of greeting (probably the kiss of peace) used among the followers of Jeschu, as we learn from B.'s recension.

will go and make an obeisance before him, and before whom I make obeisance, he is the rogue. And they did so.

The disciples of Jeschu gathered together, went and gave their fellows the greeting, for they were come from all places to pray on the Mount of Olives on the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Then the wise men went into the sanctuary, where those were who had come from Antioch, and there was also the rogue among them. Thereupon Gaisa entered with them, left the rest of the company, made an obeisance before the rogue Jeschu. Whereupon the wise men saw it, arose against him and seized him.

7. They said to him: What is thy name? He answered: Mathai. They said to him: Whence hast thou a proof from the Scripture? He answered them: When (*mathai*) shall I come and see the face of God? They said to him: When (*mathai*) shall he die and his name perish? Proofs from Scripture.

Further they said to him: What is thy name? He answered: Naki. They said to him: Whence hast thou a proof from the Scripture? He answered: with pure (*naki*) hands and a clean heart. They said to him: He remaineth not unpunished.

Further they said to him: What is thy name? He answered: Boni. They said: Whence hast thou a proof from the Scripture? He answered: My first-born son (*beni*) is Israel. They said: Of thee it was said: Behold, I will slay thy first-born son.

Further they said: What is thy name? He answered: Netzer. They said: Whence hast thou a proof from the Scripture? He answered them: A

branch (*netzer*) shall spring up out of his roots. They said to him : Thou art cast forth from thy sepulchre, like an abominable branch (*netzer*). And thus still more, as he gave himself many names.¹

Jeschu is
Hanged on a
Cabbage-
Stalk.

Forthwith they seized him, and his disciples could not deliver him. When he saw himself brought to death he began and spake: Verily hath David prophesied of me and said: For Thy sake are we smitten every day. And of you said Isaiah: Your hands are full of blood. And of you said the prophet before God: They slew Thy prophets with the sword.

The apostates began to lament and could not deliver him. At the same hour was he put to death. And it was on Friday on the rest-day of Passover and of the Sabbath. When they would hang him on a tree (*Holz*), it brake, for there was with him the Shem.²

But when the simpletons saw that the trees brake under him,³ they supposed that this was because of his great godliness, until they brought him a cabbage-stalk. For while he was yet alive he knew the custom of the Israelites, that they would hang him, he knew his death, the manner of his being put to death, and that they would hang him on a tree. At that time he brought it to pass by means of the Shem, that no tree should bear him; but over the cabbage-stalk he did not utter the pronounced name, for it is not tree but

¹ Compare with the above the Talmud passage quoted in the chapter on "The Disciples and Followers of Jesus in the Talmud."

² This is in contradiction with c. 7.

³ Another recension tells us that they tried every tree (there being seventy kinds).

green-stuff, and so ¹ [in special years there are] in Jerusalem cabbages with more than a hundred pounds [of seed] unto this day.

When they had let him hang until the time of afternoon prayer,² they took him down from the tree, for so it is written: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, etc. They buried him . . . on Sunday, and the apostates of his people wept over his grave.

8. Some of the young men of Israel passed by them. They spake to them in the Aramaic tongue: Why do the foolish ones sit by the grave? Let us look! The foolish ones said in their heart, that they [the young men] would see him in the grave, but they found him not.

The Body is
Stolen from
the Grave.

Thereupon the foolish ones sent to Queen Helene, saying: He whom they put to death was a Messiah, and very many wonders did he show while living, but now after his death they buried him, but he is not in the grave, for he is already ascended to heaven, and it is written: For He taketh me, Sela! Thus did he prophesy concerning himself.

She sent to the wise men and said: What have ye done with him? They answered her: We have put him to death, for that was the judgment concerning him.

She said to them: If ye have already put him to death, what have ye done then? They answered her: We have buried him. Forthwith they sought him in the grave and found him not.

¹ Text defective. K. supplies the lacuna with the words in brackets, but this is by no means a satisfactory conjecture, as we shall see from the reading preserved by Raymund Martini.

² About three o'clock.

Thereupon she said to them : In this grave ye buried him ; where is he therefore ?

Then were the wise men affrightened and wist not what to answer her, for a certain one had taken him from the grave, borne him to his garden, and stopped the water which flowed into his garden ; then digged he in the sand and buried him, and let the water flow again over his grave.

The Proclamation of the Queen.

The queen said : If ye show me not Jeschu, I will give you no peace and no escape. They answered her : Give us an appointed time and terms.

When she had granted them an appointed time, all Israel remained lamenting in fasting and prayer, and the apostates found occasion to say : Ye have slain God's anointed !

And all Israel was in great anguish, and the wise men and all the land of Israel hurried from place to place because of the great fear.

Then went forth an elder from them, whose name was Rabbi Tanchuma ; he went forth lamenting in a garden in the fields.

When the owner of the garden saw him, he said to him : Wherefore lamentest thou ? He answered : For this and this ; because of that rogue who is not to be found ; and lo, already is it the appointed time which the queen granted, and we are all in lamentation and fasting.

As soon as he heard his words, that all Israel is as them who mourn, and that the rogues say : He is gone up into heaven, the owner of the garden said : To-day shall joy and gladness reign in Israel, for I have stolen him away because of the apostates, so that they should

not take him and have the opportunity for all time.¹

Forthwith they went to Jerusalem, told them the good tidings, and all the Israelites followed the owner of the garden, bound cords to his [Jeschu's] feet, and dragged him round in the streets of Jerusalem, till they brought him to the queen and said: There is he who is ascended to heaven!

The Body is
Recovered.

They departed from her in joy, and she mocked the apostates and praised the wise men.

9. His disciples fled and scattered themselves in the kingdom; three of them [went] to Mount Ararat, three of them to Armenia, three to Rome, the others to other places, and misled the peoples, but everywhere where they took refuge, God sent his judgment upon them, and they were slain.

The Disciples
of Jeschu
make Strife in
Israel.

But many among the apostates of our people went astray after him; there was strife between them and the Israelites, . . .² confusion of prayers and much loss of money.³

Everywhere where the apostates caught sight of the Israelites they said to the Israelites: Ye have slain God's anointed! But the Israelites answered them: Ye are children of death, because ye have believed on a false prophet!

Nevertheless they went not forth from the community of Israel, and there was strife and contention among them, so that Israel had no peace.

¹ B.'s recension reads: "And thereafter make trouble for the Israelites."

² This word in the text is uncertain.

³ B.'s recension reads: "And they made Israel lose much money, which went into the hands of non-Jews."

When the wise men of Israel saw this they said: [It is now] thirty years since that rogue was put to death, [and] till now we have no peace with these misguided ones, and this hath befallen us because of the number of our sins, for it is written: They have moved me to wrath with their not-God¹; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities, etc.;—that is the Christians, who are not [? naught]²; with a base people will I provoke them;—that is, the Ishmaelites.³

The wise said: How long shall the apostates profane Sabbath . . . and feasts, and slay one another? Let us rather seek for a wise man who may take these erring ones out of the community of Israel. It is now thirty years that we have admonished them, but they have not returned to God, because they have taken it into their heads that Jeschu is the Messiah, and so may they go to destruction and peace be with us.

How Elijahu removed them from Israel.

10. The wise men agreed on a man whose name was Elijahu, and he was very learned in the Scripture, and they said to him: . . . We have agreed, that we will pray for thee, that thou shalt be counted as a good Israelite in the other world. Go, and do good for Israel, and remove the apostates from us, that they may go to destruction!

Elijahu went to the Sanhedrin at Tiberias, to Antioch,⁴ and made proclamation throughout the whole land of Israel: Whoso believeth on Jeschu, let him join himself

¹ A.V: "They have moved me to jealousy with *that which is* not God."

² K. adds in a note: "Who worship a not-God."

³ That is, the Mohammedans.

⁴ This seems to be a gloss.

to me! Then said he to them: I am the messenger (apostle) of Jeschu, who sent me to you, and I will show you a marvel, as Jeschu did.

They brought unto him a leper, and he laid his hand upon him, so that he was healed. They brought unto him a lame man, he uttered the Shem, laid his hand on him, and he was healed and stood upon his feet.

Forthwith they fell down before him and said: Truly thou art the messenger of Jeschu, for thou hast shown us marvels as he did.

He said to them: Jeschu sendeth you his greeting and saith: I am with my Father in heaven at His right hand, until He shall take vengeance on the Jews, as David said: Sit thou on my right hand, etc.

At the same hour they all lamented and added foolishness to their foolishness.

Elijahu said to them: Jeschu saith to you: Whosoever will be with me in the other world, let him remove himself from the community of Israel and join himself not to them; for my Father in heaven hath already rejected them and from henceforth requireth not their service, for so said He through Isaiah: Your new-moons and feasts my soul hateth, etc.

But Jeschu saith to you: Whosoever will follow me, let him profane the Sabbath, for God hateth it, but instead of it He keepeth the Sunday, for on it God gave light to His world. And for Passover which the Israelites solemnize, keep yet it on the Feast of the Resurrection, for he is risen from his grave; for the Feast of Weeks, Ascension, for on it he is ascended to heaven; for New Year, Finding of the Cross; for the Great Fast Day [Day of Atonement], the Feast of the

The Com-
mandments of
Jeschu.

Circumcision: for Chanuka [the Feast of Lights], Calendæ [New Year].

The foreskin is naught, circumcision is naught; whosoever will circumcise himself, let him be circumcised; whosoever will not circumcise himself, let him be not circumcised. Moreover, whatsoever God created in the world, from the smallest gnat to the mightiest elephant, pour forth its blood upon the ground and eat it, for so it is written: As the green grass have I given you all. If one of them compel you to go a mile, go with him twain; if a Jew smite you on the left side turn to him the right also; if a Jew revile you, endure it and return it not again, as Jeschu endured it; in meekness he showed himself, therewith he showed you also meekness as he practised it, that ye might endure all that any should do to you. At the last judgment Jeschu will punish them, but do ye have hope according to your meekness, for so it is written: Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, etc. Until he separated them from Israel.

But Elijahu who gave them these laws, the not-good ones, did it for the welfare of Israel, and the Christians call him Paul. After he had introduced these laws and commandments, the erring ones separated themselves from Israel, and the strife ceased.

The Heresy of
Nestorius.

11. A long time after the Persian power arose; then a Christian departed from them, made a mock of them, just as the heretics had laughed at the wise men [of Israel].

He said to them: Paul was in error in his scripture when he said to you: Circumcise yourselves not—for Jeschu was circumcised. Further hath Jeschu said:

I am not come to destroy even one jot from the law of Moses, but to fulfil all his words. And that is your shame, which Paul laid upon you, when he said: Circumcise yourselves not.

But Nestorius said to them: Circumcise yourselves, for Jeschu was circumcised.

Further said Nestorius: Ye heretics! Ye say Jeschu is God, though he was born of a woman. Only the Holy Spirit rested on him as on the prophets.

Nestorius who began to argue with the Christians, persuaded their women; he said to them: I will enact that no Christian take two wives.

But as Nestorius became detestable in their eyes, there arose a strife between them, in so much that no Christian would pray to the abomination of Nestorius, or the followers of Nestorius to the abomination of the Christians.

Then Nestorius went to Babylon to another place, the name of which was Chazāzā, and all fled before him, because Nestorius was a violent man.

The women said to him: What requirest thou of us? He answered them: I require only that ye receive from me the bread-and-wine offering.

Now it was the custom of the woman of Chazāzā, that they carried large keys in their hands.

He gave one of them the offering; she cast it to the ground. Whereupon the women cast the keys in their hands upon him; smote him, so that he died, and there was for long strife between them.

12. Now the chief of the Sanhedrin, his name was Shimeon Kepha—and why was he called Kepha? Because he stood on the stone on which Ezekiel had

Shimeon
Kepha.

prophesied at the river Kebar,¹ and on that stone it was that Shimeon heard a voice from heaven.² When the Christians heard that Shimeon Kepha was one of those who heard a voice from heaven, and that stores of wisdom were in him, they envied the Israelites, that so great a man was found in Israel, . . . God brought it into Shimeon's mind to go to Jerusalem . . . on the Feast of Tabernacles. And there were gathered together all the bishops and the great ancient³ of the Christians. They came to Shimeon Kepha to the Mount of Olives on the day of the great Feast of Willow-twigs.⁴ When they saw his wisdom, that [there was] not one in Israel like unto him, . . . to turn him to the religion of the Christians, and they constrained him, saying: If thou dost not profess our religion, we will put thee to death, and not leave even one remaining in Israel to go into the sanctuary.

When the Israelites perceived this, they besought him: Humour them, act according to thy wisdom; so shall neither sin nor guilt be on thee.

Thereupon when he perceived the hard fate for Israel, he betook himself to the Christians, and said to them: On this condition do I become a convert to your religion, that ye put no Jew to death, that ye smite

¹ This is transliterated in the A.V. as Chebar, presumably following the Septuagint Chobar. This Babylonian stream, near which Ezekiel had his prophetic visions, is now identified with one of the canals (Bab. *nārāti*) of Babylonia, Hilprecht having twice found mention of a certain *nāru* called Kabaru. (See art., "Chebar," in "Ency. Bib.")

² *Bath-kol*, lit., "daughter of a voice," that is, a "small voice," an inner voice.

³ Presumably the pope.

⁴ The sixth, or rather seventh, day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

him not and suffer him to go in and out in the sanctuary.

The ancient and the Christians accepted his words and all these his conditions. He made a condition with them, that they would build him a lofty tower; he would go into it, would eat no flesh, nor aught save bread and water, letting down a box by a cord, for them to supply him with only bread and water, and he would remain in the tower until his death.

All this he did with respect to God, that he might not be stained and sullied by them, and that he might not mix with them; but to the Christians he spake in their sense as though he would mourn for Jeschu, and eat no flesh or aught else, but bread and water only.

They built him a tower, and he dwelt therein; he sullied himself not with eating, and prayed not to the Cross.

Afterwards he composed in the tower Keroboth, Jotzroth and Zulthoth¹ in his name, like Eliezer ben Kalir.² He sent and gathered together the elders of Israel, and handed over to their care all that he had found in his mind, and charged them that they should teach it to the leaders in prayer³ and use it for prayers, so that they might make mention of him for good.

They, moreover, sent it⁴ to Babylon to Rabbi Nathan,⁵ the Prince of the Exile, and they showed it

The Scrip-
tures of
Shimeon.

¹ Various kinds of synagogue poetry.

² A famous synagogue poet, whose probable date is about 900 A.D.

³ *Vorbetern* = precentors.

⁴ That is, the book of prayers.

⁵ Can this be meant for R. Nathan ha-Babli, who came from Babylonia in the days of R. Shimeon ben Gamaliel II., and

to the heads of the schools, to the Sanhedrin, and they said: It is good, and they taught it to the leaders in prayer of all Israel, and they used it for prayers. Whosoever would mention the name of Shimeon in his chanting did so. May his memory endure to the life of the other world. But God in his mercy . . . him as a good defender. Amen! Sela!

settled in Palestine? The recension of the Sayings of the Fathers attributed to Rabbi Nathan, included in the *Pirke Aboth* tractate of the Talmud, is probably to be attributed to him. He belonged to the fourth generation of Tanäim, that is to say, he flourished about 160-220 A.D.

XV.—TRACES OF EARLY TOLDOTH FORMS.

IN the chapter on "The Earliest External Evidence as to the Talmud Jesus Stories," we ceased our enquiries with Tertullian at the end of the second century. We will now resume our researches with the special object of seeing whether any of the scattered notices of Jew versus Christian polemics which we have been able to collect, may be referred to the Toldoth as distinguished from the Talmud stories. Doubtless when the attention of scholars is more generally turned to the subject, some further out-of-the-way scraps of information may be added, but the following is as complete as we have been able to make it in the present state of affairs.

Toldoth as distinguished from Talmud Stories.

We will first of all repeat the passage we have already quoted from Tertullian, for its last sentence shows that in every probability the "gardener" and "cabbage" elements were in existence in his day, and these indubitably form part of the Toldoth as distinguished from the Talmud tradition.

Writing about 197-198 A.D., the Bishop of Carthage thus rhetorically addresses the Jews ("De Spect.," xxx.): "This is your carpenter's son, your harlot's son; your Sabbath-breaker, your Samaritan, your demon-possessed! This is He whom ye bought from Judas;

Tertullian.

He who was struck with reed and fists, dishonoured with spittle, and given a draught of gall and vinegar ! This He whom His disciples have stolen away secretly, that it may be said He has risen, or the gardener abstracted that his lettuces might not be damaged by the crowds of visitors.”¹

When I mentioned this passage to a learned Jewish friend, he remarked that probably the Toldoth legend-makers had woven their story out of this sentence of the Church Father. It is, however, most highly improbable that the detailed Toldoth story could be based upon the scornful concluding sentence of Tertullian, for surely the Jews were not students nor even readers of the Fathers.

Does he refer
to a Jesus
Story ?

It seems far more probable that the Bishop of Carthage is referring to some well-known Jewish story familiar to all his readers. The body was removed by the gardener ; but why ? Of course, says Tertullian, to save his cabbages, for his garden was being trampled out of all existence by the crowds who came to see !

Now one of the earliest Toldoth recensions known to us from outside sources (Hrabanus Maurus) speaks of the body being originally buried in a garden,² and

¹ The most recent translator—Cruttwell (C. T.), “A Literary History of Early Christianity” (London ; 1893), ii, 582—renders the last sentence freely as : “Or if you prefer it, whom the gardener put away lest his herbs should be crushed by the press of feet.” No explanation, however, is given, as, indeed, is invariably the case with all translators and commentators.

² It is to be noticed that the only evangelist who speaks of the sepulchre being in a garden, and consequently of a gardener, is the mystic writer of the fourth Gospel (John xix. 41 ; xx. 15).

that, too, a garden full of cabbages, and being handed over to a certain Jew to guard.

We, therefore, conclude with very great confidence that this deposit of the Toldoth goes back to the story, whatever it was, which so roused the wrath of Tertullian.

Moreover, in his polemic against the Jews, the Bishop of Carthage declares ("Adv. Judæos," c. ix., last para.) that not even do they deny that Jesus performed wonders of healing, "inasmuch as ye used to say that it was not on account of the works that ye stoned him, but because he did them on the Sabbath."

Jesus is
Stoned.

Is Tertullian here referring to some tradition of the Jews of which he had heard, or only looking back to John v. 17, 18, and x. 31, 33? And if the latter, had the writer of the fourth Gospel in mind some tradition of stoning, which he thus worked into his mystic narrative? The Talmud Lud stories know of a tradition of stoning, and they were presumably in existence in Tertullian's time. But did the writer of the fourth Gospel also know of such a tradition; and are we thus to push this element back to the end of the first century or so? Like the Talmud, the Toldoth recensions also know of a stoning, or a stoning and hanging, or of a hanging alone, but never of a crucifixion.

In the Clementine Recognitions (i. 42), of which the form lying before us is generally ascribed to the third century, but which contain far older material, we read: "For some of them, watching the place with care, when they could not prevent His rising again, said that He was a magician, others pretended that His body was stolen away."

The Clemen-
tines.

Pagan
Writers.

If the works of any Pagan writers could have helped us in this matter, it was to be expected that of all others the books of Porphyry, Hierocles and Julian against the Christians would have furnished us with some valuable information, but unfortunately only a few fragments of these polemical treatises have been preserved, and these, in spite of the closest scrutiny, can show us only that all these philosophers regarded the wonder-doings of Jesus as being due to his magical powers, or rather to the fact of his being a Magus, like many others in antiquity. Such miracles did not prove the contention of the Christians that Jesus was God, for similar wonders, equally well authenticated, and in a more recent case better authenticated according to Hierocles, had been done by others.

Porphyry. Porphyry (233-? 305 A.D.) wrote fifteen books "Against the Christians," and no less than thirty champions of the Faith, we are told, attempted to refute him; nevertheless only a few fragments of what must have been a very drastic criticism have been preserved to us;¹ for not only the original, but also every one of the thirty refutations, have disappeared, and this is strange, for it is to be supposed that at least some of these thirty must have been thought by the Fathers to have disposed of the Syrian's contentions. Porphyry knew Hebrew, and it might therefore be expected that he was acquainted with any tradition of the Jews hostile to Christian claims. It is true that a modern writer asserts that the disciple of Plotinus gives the name

¹ See Georgiades (A.), *περὶ τῶν κατὰ Χριστιανῶν ἀποσπασμάτων τοῦ Πορφύριου* (Leipzig ; 1891).

Pandera as "Panzerius," but, so far, I have not been able to verify this unreferenced statement.¹

Hierocles, successively governor of Palmyra, Bithynia and Alexandria, and also a philosopher, in 305 A.D., wrote a criticism on the claims of the Christians in two books, called "A Truthful Address to the Christians," or more briefly "The Truth-lover." He seems to have based himself for the most part on the previous works of Celsus and Porphyry, but introduced a new subject of controversy by opposing the wonderful works of Apollonius of Tyana to the claims of the Christians to exclusive right in miracles as proof of the divinity of their Master. To this pertinent criticism Eusebius immediately replied in a treatise still extant.² Hierocles.

Julian the Emperor (360-363 A.D.), somewhere about 362-363, wrote seven books "Against the Christians"; a number of Church writers replied, the most famous being Cyril of Alexandria, who wrote (somewhere between 429 and 441 A.D.) an enormous work of eighteen books, apparently, however, dealing with only three books of Julian's indictment. Unfortunately only fragments of Cyril's treatise have been preserved to us.³ Julian the Emperor.

¹ Massey (G.), "The Natural Genesis" (London ; 1883), ii. 489.

² The most convenient text is by Gaisford, "Eusebii Pamphili contra Hieroclem" (London ; 1852), see my "Apollonius of Tyana, the Philosopher Reformer of the First Century A.D." (London ; 1901), pp. 32 ff.

³ See Neumann (C. J.), "Juliani Imp. Librorum contra Christianos quæ supersunt" (Leipzig ; 1880). This is the third fasciculus of a proposed series, "Scriptorum Græcorum qui Christianam impugnaverunt Religionem," but the first and second parts, presumably containing the fragments of Celsus, Porphyry and Hierocles, have not yet seen the light. For the information of book-lovers I may mention that I have in my possession a rare work of Thomas

The "Chrest"
John.

It is no part of our present task to enquire into the arguments of Julian, but there is one passage which contains a strange phrase bearing on the question of the confusion of Chrestos and Christos to which we have already referred in an earlier chapter. Julian thus writes:

"At any rate neither Paul nor Matthew nor Mark dared to say that Jesus is God, but only the good John (ὁ χρηστός Ἰωάννης) . . . ventured to assert this."

What does Julian mean by distinguishing John from the rest as "the chrēst John"? Does he refer to John as an illuminate? Did the original even read "the christ John"?

The Acts of
Pionius.

But to return to our "traces"; the Acts of Pionius, who is said to have been martyred in 250 A.D., and the original of whose Acta was certainly read by Eusebius at the beginning of the fourth century, state¹ that the Jews "say that Christ practised necromancy, and that it was by its power that he was brought to life after the crucifixion."

But that he rose again, in the physical sense, is just what all the Jews have ever denied, and we can only

Taylor, "The Arguments of the Emperor Julian against the Christians," (London; 1809), which a slip from a catalogue gummed inside the cover states to have been "privately printed by Mr Meredith, who destroyed, for fear of prosecution, the entire impression with the exception of 5 or 6 copies. For one of these copies," it adds, "he in vain offered £100." What truth there may be in this statement I do not know, for I also possess a copy of a book called "Arguments of Celsus, Porphyry and the Emperor Julian against the Christians" (London; 1830), also plainly the work of Thomas Taylor, but without his name on the title-page, and this was not withdrawn from circulation.

¹ See Bollandist Collection, under Feb. 1 (c. iii.).

suppose that the redactor of the Acts has here misunderstood the general charge of the Jews and Pagans that Jesus learned magic in Egypt.

Thus the converted philosopher Arnobius, who wrote Arnobius. his treatise "Against the Nations" somewhere about 303-313 A.D., tells us (i. 43), that the commonest argument against the claims of the Christians concerning Jesus was: "He was a Magus; he did all these things (*sc. miracula*) by secret arts; from the shrines of the Egyptians he stole the names of angels of might and hidden disciplines."¹

This, as we have already seen, was one of the main elements of the Talmud stories; the Toldoth, however, though they retain the strange fashion in which the magic was brought out of Egypt, have converted the shrines of Egypt into the sanctuary of the Temple at Jerusalem.

We next come to a curious passage in Ephrem Syrus Ephrem
Syrus. (*c.* 308-373 A.D.), which tells us that "the anti-christ serpent shall be born of a Danite mother² and a Latin father, who stealthily and with unlawful love shall glide like a slippery snake to the embraces of his mate."³

The "Latin father," says Krauss (p. 216), seems to refer to the "Roman soldier" Panthera spoken of by

¹ Hildebrand (G. F.), "Arnobii Adv. Nationes" (Halle; 1844), p. 67.

² Cf. Gen. xlix. 17. "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path."

³ "Ephrem Syrus in Genesim," vol. i. p. 192 D. of the Vatican edition of Benedict (Rome; 1737). See also Bousset (W.), "Der Antichrist in der Überlieferung des Judenthums, des neuen Testaments und der alten Kirche" (Göttingen; 1895), pp. 79 and 92.

Celsus, and the rest of the sentence seems to represent the stealthy proceedings of Pandera in the Toldoth.¹

Jerome. In his Letter to Heliodorus, which was written in 374 A.D., Jerome seems to have had in memory the passage of Tertullian ("De Spect.") which we have already quoted, for he writes: "He is that son of a workman and of a harlot; He it is who . . . fled into Egypt; He the clothed with a scarlet robe; He the crowned with thorns; He a Magus demon-possessed, and a Samaritan!"²

Further, in his Letter to Titus (iii. 9), Jerome writes: "I heard formerly concerning the Hebrews . . . at Rome . . . that they bring into question the genealogies of Christ." Krauss (p. 4.) thinks that this refers to a distinct altercation, or a set synod, in which the question of the Genealogies, that is, the "*Generaciones*" (Toldoth) of Jesus, were brought into question; but in the question of a synod I cannot follow him.³

Epiphanius About the same date (375 A.D.) we find Epiphanius stating in the genealogy of Jesus ("Hær.," lxxvii. 7), that Joseph was the son of a certain Jacob whose surname was Panther, an extraordinary declaration which we will treat at greater length later on when we come to speak of a still more striking statement of the Bishop of Constantia.

¹ But, as I have already stated in the chapter on "The Talmud Mary Stories," I cannot discover the "Roman soldier" in Celsus; there is a "soldier" Panthera, but neither in i. 32 or in i. 69 is there anything to denote his nationality.

² Migne, "Patrol. Cursus Complet. Lat.," tom xxi., "S. Eusebii Hieronymi Opera Omnia" (Paris; 1845), tom. i. col. 354; Epistola xiv. 11.

³ Moreover, I cannot verify his quotation.

That prolific commentator John Chrysostom, in the fragments which have survived of his Homilies on the Psalms, written somewhere towards the close of the fourth century, remarks (Ps. viii. no. 3. c. v.): "And if you ask them (the Jews), Why did ye crucify the Christ?—they reply, Because he was a deceiver and a sorcerer."

John
Chrysostom.

But the Jews would never have admitted the question in this form, for the very simple reason that they consistently denied that Jesus was the Christ. Whether they would have admitted even that they had "crucified" him, is to be doubted.

Oehler gives "Theodoret,¹ H. S., iii. 11" as a confirmatory reference to the passage of Tertullian we have quoted above, but I cannot verify this.

From the "Disputatio cum Herbano Judæo," attributed to Gregontius, Bishop of Taphar in Arabia, who flourished in the second half of the fifth century, we also learn that the Jews declared that Jesus had been put to death because he was a magician.²

Gregontius.

John of Damascus, in the first half of the eighth century, in giving the genealogy of Mary, tells us ("De Fid. Orthod.," iv. 14) that Joachim was the father of Mary, Bar Panther the father of Joachim, and Levi the father of Bar Panther, and, therefore, presumably Panther himself. As also in the case of Epiphanius, John does not breathe a word of Panther (Pandra) being the invention of an enemy, but simply records the name as a genuine piece of accepted history.

John of
Damascus.

¹ 385-453 A.D.

² "Bibliothèque des Pères de Margarin de la Bigue," t. i., as quoted by Bullet, *op. sub. cit.*, p. 95.

It is also very plain that the famous Damascene does not copy from Epiphanius, but draws from some other totally different tradition.

So far it must be confessed that if we except Ephrem Syrus, we have not, since the end of the second century, met with any indications which would enable us clearly to distinguish Toldoth stuff from Talmud tradition, but with the ninth century we come to undeniable proofs of the existence of highly-developed forms of Toldoth as contrasted with Talmud data.

Agobard. In his "De Judaicis Superstitionibus," Agobard, Bishop of Lyons, writing somewhere about 820-830 A.D., makes the following highly interesting statement :

"For in the teachings of their elders they (the Jews) read: That Jesus was a youth held in esteem among them, who had for his teacher John the Baptist; that he had very many disciples, to one of whom he gave the name Cephas, that is Petra (Rock), because of the hardness and dulness of his understanding; that when the people were waiting for him on the feast-day, some of the youths of his company ran to meet him, crying unto him out of honour and respect, 'Hosanna, son of David'; that at last having been accused on many lying charges, he was cast into prison by the decree of Tiberius, because he had made his (T's) daughter (to whom he had promised the birth of a male child without [contact with] a man) conceive of a stone; that for this cause also he was hanged on a stake as an abominable sorcerer; whereon being smitten on the head with a rock and in this way slain, he was buried by a canal, and handed over to a certain Jew to guard; by night, however, he was

carried away by a sudden overflowing of the canal, and though he was sought for twelve moons by the order of Pilate, he could never be found; that then Pilate made the following legal proclamation unto them: It is manifest, said he, that he has risen, as he promised, he who for envy was put to death by you, and neither in the grave nor in any other place is he found; for this cause, therefore, I decree that ye worship him; and he who will not do so, let him know that his lot will be in hell (*in inferno*).

"Now all these things their elders have so garbled, and they themselves read them over and over again with such foolish stubbornness, that by such fictions the whole truth of the virtue and passion of Christ is made void, as though worship should not be shown Him as truly God, but is paid Him only because of the law of Pilate."¹

The above is manifestly a very rough report of some Toldoth recension; it is impossible to say whether the Bishop of Lyons, who knew no Hebrew or Aramaic, has reported quite correctly what he had heard of the Jews, who in his day had flocked to Lyons in great numbers, and of whom he was a strenuous and bitter opponent, writing no less than four treatises against them. As we shall see later on, however, he could not have been very far out as to some of the main features of his report. The most important point is that Agobard twice tells us that the Jews "read" such stories; Toldoth Jeschu had, therefore, been committed to writing at least prior to the early years of the ninth

Written
Toldoth.

¹ I translate from the very poor Latin of the text printed by Krauss (p. 5) from "Patr. Lat.," civ. p. 87.

century. So much is certain ; how much earlier than this they existed in written form we have so far no means of deciding.

Hrabanus
Maurus.

Almost about the same date, moreover, we find Hrabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz, acquainted with a totally different form of Toldoth. In his book, "Contra Judæos," written about 847 A.D. (K. 7), he tells us:

"They (the Jews) blaspheme because we believe on him whom the Law of God saith was hanged on a tree and cursed by God, . . . and [they declare] that on the protest and by direction of his teacher Joshua (*i.e.*, J. ben Perachiah), he was taken down from the tree, and cast into a grave in a garden full of cabbages, so that their land should not be made impure . . . ; they call him in their own tongue *Ussum Hamizri*, which means in Latin, *Dissipator Ægyptius* (the Egyptian Destroyer). . . . And they say that after he had been taken down from the tree, he was again taken out of the grave by their forebears, and was dragged by a rope through the whole city, and thus cast . . ., confessing that he was a godless one, and the son of a godless [fellow], that is of some Gentile or other whom they call *Pandera*, by whom they say the mother of the Lord was seduced, and thence he whom we believe on, born." ¹

As to the original from which this passage is taken, *Bullet (op. sub. cit., p. 97)* tells us that it was first printed at Dijon by the learned Father Pierre François Chifflet, of the Company of Jesus.² It was attributed

¹ Krauss (p. 13) gives the text as taken from Wagenseil's Foreword to his "*Tela Ignea Satanæ*," p. 52.

² There is no copy of this work in the British Museum.

by him to Raban Maur, Archbishop of Mainz, who was subsequently identified by a number of scholars with Amolon, who succeeded Agobard in the see of Lyons.

If this identification is correct, as Agobard died in 840, we must suppose that Hrabanus wrote his treatise at Lyons. But the type of Toldoth quoted differs so entirely from that of Agobard, that it is taken by Krauss (p. 13) to represent a German form as distinguished from Agobard's recension, which he calls "romanische." In any case the name of the Archbishop argues that he probably had some acquaintance with Hebrew, and therefore that perhaps he is drawing from a written source; it is, however, very evident that he is at best summarizing very roughly.

The otherwise unknown Ussum (? or Ussus = Jeschu) ha-Mizri is a puzzle; neither Krauss (p. 13) nor Bischoff (*ibid.*, n.) can make anything out of it as it stands. I would, however, suggest that whatever the original of Ussum may have been, if it meant "Dissipator," we may have to do with some play on the meaning of Balaam (the Destroyer), and that the name means simply "the Egyptian destroyer of the people." It is, however, of interest to notice that in Huldreich's text (pp. 20, 24, 26) the name of Pandera is given as "the Egyptian," because "he did the work of the Egyptians."

Ussum ha-Mizri.

As to the Mary story which Suidas, in the tenth or eleventh century, reproduces in his Lexicon (*s.v.* "Jesus"), and to which Krauss (p. 4) refers as apposite to our enquiry, I have carefully gone through it, and agree with Bischoff (*ibid.*, n.) that it contains nothing of a Toldoth nature.

Suidas.

Peter
Alphonsi.

We next come to the "Dialogues" of Petrus Alphonsus (or Alphonsi), who lived in the early years of the twelfth century. Peter before his conversion had been called Moses; in the Dialogues between the Jews and Christians, therefore, the *dramatis personæ* appear as Moses and Peter.

Moses declares that the Jews contend that Jesus "was a magician and the son of a harlot, and that he led the whole nation into error."

"He was a magician," he repeats, "and by magic art led the sons of Israel into error; and over and above this he proclaimed himself the Son of God."

To Peter's objection, How could Jesus have learned magic enough to have turned water into wine, healed lepers, lame, deaf, dumb, and blind, and beyond all this to have brought the dead to life?—Moses replies: "Our learned men declare that he learned it in Egypt." ¹

With regard to this Peter, Kohler and Gottheil ² write: "The first apostate that is known to have written against the Jewish creed was Moses Sephardi, known by the name of Petrus Alfonsi (physician to Alfonso VI.),

¹ The portion of the "Dialogues" bearing on our enquiry will be found in the Abbé M. Bullet's "Histoire de l'Établissement du Christianisme tirée des seuls Auteurs juifs et payens" (Paris; 1764), pp. 99 ff.; Bullet gives his reference as "Bibliothèque des Pères de Lyon," vol. xxi. There is also a German translation of Bullet's work, "Gesch. der Gründung des Christenthums," by P. J. Weckers (Mainz; 1830). Bullet, in the French edition, gives a paraphrase of Wagenseil's Toldoth text (pp. 75–84), a brief *résumé* of Huldreich's (pp. 85–86), the Latin text (pp. 89–92) and a translation of Raymund Martini (des Martins) (pp. 86–89), and the text and translation of Agobard (pp. 96, 97).

² In their article "Apostasy and Apostates from Judaism" in the "Jewish Encyclopædia" (New York; 1902).

baptised in 1106, and author of the well-known collection of fables, 'Disciplina Clericalis.' He wrote a work against Jewish and Mohammedan doctrines, entitled, 'Dialogi in Quibus Impiæ Judæorum et Saracenorum Opiniones Confutantur.' This book, however, seems to have had little influence."

The importance of our quotations is that Peter Alphonsi was a Jew of Spain; it is true that we gain very little from Peter, but a fellow-countryman of his, or, at any rate, one who was familiar with Spanish Jewry, Raymund Martini, has more to tell us. Raymund was born at Sobriat in 1236, and died in 1286. He sat on the Inquisitorial Commission at Barcelona, and was very energetic against the Jews in Spain. Raymund was a Dominican, and is regarded as the first Christian of his time to study Oriental languages. His great work against the Jews was called "Pugio Fidei," or the "Poignard of Faith."¹ In it, under the heading "Fabula de Christi Miraculis Judaica, id est Maligna,"² we find a lengthy quotation, of which, however, there is no need to give a translation, for with a few variants of no particular importance it is verbally identical with chapters 3-5 of the Strassbourg MS. Toldoth, a translation of which we have already given.

It is thus proved beyond a doubt that this portion of the contents of the Strass. MS. goes back, verbally, at least to the middle of the thirteenth century. More-

¹ This was first edited by J. P. Mansacci (Paris; 1642); second edition by J. de Voisin (Paris; 1651); copies of neither of these editions are in the British Museum; the last edition is by J. B. Carpzov (Leipzig; 1687).

² Carpzov's edition, pars ii. cap. viii. § vi., pp. 362-364, corresponding to foll. 290, 291 of orig. edition.

over, it appears probable that the written Toldoth from which R. Martini translated may have contained chapters 1 and 2 of the Strass. MS., otherwise there would be no point for the reader in the phrase put into the mouth of Jesus, "Behold, the wise say I am a bastard!"

That the original otherwise contained more than the translator gives us is highly improbable, for one of the Oxford MSS. agrees substantially with Raymund's version, and therefore probably derives from the same original.

The Cabbage-
stalk.

After the phrase of the queen, "He is in your hands!"—Raymundus at once jumps to the hanging on the cabbage-stalk incident (of c. 7 of S. MS.), concerning which, his authority tells him, that this is by no means wonderful, "for every year there grows in the House of the Sanctuary one cabbage so large that a hundred pounds of seed come from it." This is different from Krauss' emendation of the defective passage in the Strass. MS. In Martini the miraculous cabbage-stalk has its genesis in the mysteries of the Sanctuary, and is not merely the outcome of the fertile soil of Jerusalem. Martini here brings the "fabula" to an abrupt end.

Luther. This Toldoth extract of Martini was copied by Porchettus (Salvagus, or de Salvaticis), a Carthusian monk of Genoa, who flourished in the beginning of the fourteenth century, and a good Oriental scholar, in his work against the Jews, entitled "Victoria," which was printed in 1520¹; from this Luther made a translation

¹ "Victoria Porcheti adversus impios Hebræos," ed. by R. P. A. Justiniani (Paris; 1520).

into German under the heading, "Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi."¹

Finally we come to the very interesting passage in "The Touchstone" of Schemtob ibn Schaprut, who flourished at the end of the fourteenth century. This work has never been printed as a whole, but Krauss points the Hebrew text of our passage (pp. 146, 147),² and appends a German translation (pp. 148, 149). This passage runs as follows:

Schemtob ibn Schaprut.

"Behold, ye find with them (the Jews) many writings which give account of them (the wonders and signs of Jesus); for instance the document which was composed as a History of Jeschu ha-Notzri, and [states] that it took place in the time of Queen Helene; further, in the document which was composed as a History of Jeschu ben Pandera in Aramaic, which purports that it was in the time of Tiberius Cæsar.

"In the first document it is written that Jeschu cut open the flesh of his hip, without it hurting him, placed the copy of the Shem ha-Meporesch therein, drew the skin together over it, so that it healed; afterwards he took the copy out again from under the skin and did signs and wonders. He spake to the young men of Israel: Would ye have a sign from me? Bring me a lame man; I will heal him. Forthwith they brought unto him the lame man, who had never yet stood upon his feet; he uttered the letters over him, passed his hand over him, and he was made whole.

History of Jeschu ha-Notzri.

¹ (Jena; 1583 ed.), vol. iii. ff. 109, 110.

² From pp. 180, 181 of the MS. in the Jewish Theological Seminary at Breslau; there is also, I find, another copy in the Orient. Dept. of the British Museum, Add. 26964.

Further he said: I am Son of God; I raise the dead. Immediately Queen Helene sent trusty messengers to him; she sent and they saw that he raised the dead. They came, told it unto her, and she was affrightened. She said to the wise men: That is a great sign. And she gave the Jews who strove with him a reproof, and they departed from her ashamed and disgraced.

"Further [it is written] that the people of Galilee made birds of clay; he uttered the Shem over them, and they flew into the air. At the same hour they fell down on their faces and cast themselves down before him.

"Further he said to them: Bring me a great millstone. They brought it unto him, and he launched it on the sea; sat himself thereon, and made it float on the water like an eggshell. He sat thereon, a wind bore him along on the surface of the water, and all the people were greatly amazed.

"Further he said before the queen: I ascend hence to my Father in heaven! He spread forth his hands and raised himself in the air twixt heaven and earth. The queen was affrightened, and the whole people wondered greatly.

"Further [it is written] that at the end he was to be crucified; he therefore laid a spell upon all the trees of the world, so that they might not bear his hanged body. When, then, he was hanged on the tree, it broke under him, and in like fashion all trees broke under him and received him not.

History of
Jeschu ben
Pandera.

"And in the second document it is written: There came Pilate, the governor, Rabbi Joshua ben Perachiah, Marinus, the great ancient of the Jews, R. Juda Ganiba,

R. Jochanan ben Mut'ana, and Jeschu ben Pandera to Tiberias before Tiberius Cæsar. He (T.) said to them: What is your business? He (J.) said to them: I am Son of God; I wound and I heal, and if any man die, I whisper over him, and he lives; and a woman who has not borne a child, I make her conceive without a husband. He (T.) said to them: On that will I test you. I have a daughter who has not yet seen a man; make it that she conceive. They said to him: Have her brought before us. He gave commandment to his steward; he brought her. They [?] whispered over her and she became pregnant.

"And when the condemnation of Jeschu was proclaimed, and the time came to crucify him, and he saw the cross about the fourth hour of the day, he spake words of magic, flew away and sat himself upon Mount Carmel. R. Juda the gardener said to R. Joshua ben Perachiah: I will go after him and bring him back. He answered: Go, utter and pronounce the name of his Lord, that is the Schem ha-Mephoresch. He went and flew after him. When he would seize him, Jeschu spake words of magic, went into the cave of Elias, and shut the door. Juda the gardener came and said to the cave: Open, for I am God's messenger. It opened. Thereupon Jeschu made himself into a bird; R. Juda seized him by the hem of his garment and came before R. Joshua and the companions."

It is very evident that the Hebrew form of Toldoth quoted by Schemtob is identical with that quoted by Raymundus Martini. It is a shortened form, but the wording is frequently identical. The only variant is that Schemtob adds to the mill-stone miracle that a

Value of
Schemtob's
Evidence.

wind arose and bore him over the water; he also has "crucified" where Martini has "hanged." It is also remarkable that Schemtob practically begins and ends in his narrative where Martini does. Did he, then, copy from Martini? This is hardly to be believed. If not, then the copies of the Hebrew original which lay before those two scholars must have been a shortened form of Toldoth. What connection this form of Toldoth may have had with that known to Hrabanus Maurus we cannot tell, for the incidents do not in any way overlap, and there are no names to help us out.

With regard to the Aramaic form of Toldoth quoted by Schemtob, it is probable that it may be the recension used by the Jews at Lyons, some of the contents of which had come to Agobard by hearsay. But of this we cannot be certain, for Agobard reports a form of Toldoth which speaks of stoning and hanging on a stake, while Schemtob speaks of crucifixion; as, however, we have found him altering "hanging" into "crucifixion" where we can check him by Martini, so here we must suppose that "crucifixion" is a gloss, and the original spoke only of "hanging."

Aramaic
Toldoth
Forms.

This Aramaic form may also be compared with the few tattered fragments of an Aramaic Toldoth, recovered from the Geniza (or "lumber room" for worn-out or imperfect MSS.)¹ of the Old Synagogue at Cairo, which have the distinction of being the oldest Toldoth

¹ Maimonides describes the Geniza as follows: "A Codex of the Law which is decayed or is rendered ritually illegal is to be put into an earthen vessel and buried by the side of sages, and this constitutes its Geniza" ("Hilchoth Sepher Torah," x. 3). See Ginsburg's "Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible," p. 156, n.

MS. known to us. From them, however, we can make out little that will help us, except that they introduce Joshua ben Perachiah, and also the miracle of making a certain virgin pregnant without contact with a man. As this takes place before a certain "emperor" who is not named, it must be supposed that it refers to the Tiberius legend. It is further to be noticed that the body of Jesus is said to have been dragged round in the streets of Tiberias; upon which we might speculate that this form of Toldoth arose in the famous Rabbinic circles of Tiberias and that the name of the school suggested the name of the emperor, just as the Lud stories brought Akiba into personal relationship with Mary.

And here we may bring our enquiry into the nature of the earlier Toldoth forms to a conclusion; it may be that some day in the near future the industry of scholarship may be able to throw some further light on the subject, but at present it is impossible to say precisely how these different forms developed.

XVI.—THE 100 YEARS B.C. DATE IN THE TOLDOTH.

Value of the
Toldoth for
our Enquiry.

THE question which now arises is: Can this tangled growth of legend in any way help us in our present enquiry? The answer to this question is: If the Talmud Jesus stories are amazing in their contradictions on such a fundamental point as the time when Jesus lived, the Toldoth legends are even more astonishingly self-contradictory; yet, strange to say, the nature of the increased contradictions of the latter is such as to make us hesitate before we instantly reject the Ben Perachiah element as utterly unworthy of even momentary consideration.

Impossibility
of Tracing
accurately the
Evolution of
the Toldoth.

A glance at the meagre external evidence as to the existence of early Toldoth stuff as distinguished from Talmud Jesus matter shows us how impossible it is to trace any distinct moments in the evolution of this rank growth of Jewish folk-lore; for from the time of Tertullian till the beginning of the ninth century, when we for the first time meet with traces of two absolutely contradictory Toldoth recensions, one placing Jesus in the days of Joshua ben Perachiah, and the other associating him with Tiberius and Pilate, we have hardly anything to guide us, for not even the fact

that the Ben Pandera legend had spread so far and wide that we find two Church Fathers compelled to insert the name in the genealogies of Jesus and Mary can help us in this connection.

It is evident, therefore, that any attempt to trace the main moments in the evolution of the Toldoth as it stands in the many varieties and recensions of its first written form, if, indeed, these all spring from a single original written form, is a matter almost entirely of internal evidence, if not of pure subjectivity. Moreover, we have not to deal with a Toldoth Jeschu only but we have also before us a kind of Maase Apostolim, or Apostle-history or Acts of Apostles, and also a heresy-history (Nestorius), which may or may not have formed part of the first written form of Toldoth; and, therefore, any attempt to make the date of this first written Toldoth depend on data drawn from what have all the appearance of being supplements or appendices is open to grave objections.

But, whatever the first written form of Toldoth Jeschu may have been, it must have depended upon older oral sources. What was the nature of those oral sources? Here again we cannot answer with any certainty, for we do not know what the first written form of the Toldoth contained. All we definitely know is that at the end of the second century Tertullian is acquainted with an element which we find in the Toldoth and nowhere else. When, then, Krauss (p. 3) says that the "whole content" of the Toldoth was known to Tertullian, by this he can only mean that the points mentioned by the Bishop of Carthage are found in the Toldoth generally, and also, it may be remarked,

Genesis of the
Toldoth.

in more or less the same order. But even so, it must be confessed that the indications are for the most part exceedingly vague, and we can draw no satisfactory conclusions from them.

It must be remembered that we are trying to get at the earliest *Jewish* sources of Toldoth stuff, for it is quite evident that the later, perhaps even, it may be, the earlier, written forms of Toldoth drew from Christian sources as well.

The Oldest
Oral Sources.

What, then, were these Jewish sources? Were they simply the Talmud Jesus stories? It is true that some of the Toldoth recensions, in some details, seem to draw directly from them, but they generally treat these elements with such great freedom, that we cannot believe they depended upon them as the only source; on the contrary, there is much in the Toldoth of a similar nature and yet entirely absent from the Talmud.

Krauss' theory (p. 242)¹ is that, seeing the Toldoth recensions know Jesus only as Ben Pandera, and never as Ben Stada, they, therefore, look back to that sagacircle known to Celsus, that is to a body of living oral tradition, part of which was gradually introduced into the Talmud and part worked up into the written Toldoth. This of course applies only to the oldest deposit of the Toldoth, whatever that may have been, and it is very probable that such may have been the case.

¹ Krauss' argument (pp. 238-242), that the "principal source" of the Toldoth is the lost Hebrew History of Josippon (not Flavius Josephus), whom, he says, the Jews regarded as the main source of the events of the period of the Second Temple, appears to me to be somewhat problematical; in any case we can no longer get at Josippon, for his History is unfortunately lost.

The question that next arises is: What elements of the Toldoth can be attributed to this oldest deposit of Jewish oral tradition? This is an exceedingly difficult question to answer. As far as the Ben Pandera or Mamzer element is concerned, we have no further interest in it as far as our present enquiry is concerned, for we hold that this element arose out of the controversy concerning the virgin-birth dogma, and whenever precisely this may have been first debated, it was clearly a comparatively late development even in Christian tradition.

The Oldest
Toldoth
Elements.

Are there, however, any elements in this chaos of oral tradition older than the Mamzer-legend? And if so, is the Ben Perachiah date one of them? This latter is the whole crux of our enquiry, and we will, therefore, deal with it to the exclusion of any other elements which might be held to be of very early date.

We have already examined the Talmud Ben Perachiah story. Can the Toldoth recensions throw any further light on the question?

At first sight it would appear that they only add chaos to confusion. Many give the Joshua ben Perachiah (or Simeon ben Shetach) date, some give the Christian canonical date, and some confound the two. But the main interest of the Toldoth in this connection is that the most frequent date-indication, for it occurs in almost all recensions, is the mention of a certain Queen Helene, in whose hand is the sovereignty of all Jewry, and before whom the trial of Jesus takes place. This name never appears in the Talmud Jesus stories, nor, for a matter of that, do the names of Herod, or Pilate, or John the Baptist (or any

A New Date-
Indication in
the Toldoth.

other that confirm the Christian canonical date); the only date-indications in the Talmud are, as we have seen before, on the one hand the mention of Joshua ben Perachiah and Jannai in connection with Jesus, and on the other the Akiba Mary story.

Even the few forms of the Toldoth which follow the Herod or Pilate date cannot escape from Joshua ben Perachiah, for instance, the Aramaic form referred to by Agobard and Schemtob, while even the late Huldreich recension,¹ which in some things seems to adopt the Talmud Lud tradition (though there is no mention of Ben Stada), and works in more Christian elements than any of the other forms, states that Jesus went to the school of Joshua ben Perachiah. It is true that Bischoff's Judæo-German version introduces (§ 21) the name of Pilate, and associates him with Queen Helene, as also it brings in the twelve Apostles (who are otherwise unknown to Jewish tradition), in addition to the three hundred and twenty; but these glosses are unknown to S., which B. otherwise seems to follow, while B. itself categorically declares that Jesus was a pupil of Joshua ben Perachiah.

The Jungle
of Dates.

But we are not yet out of the jungle, for although in most MSS. Helene is mentioned without any further qualification than a statement which is equivalent to saying that she was queen of the Jews, in one or two MSS. of the de Rossi type she is said to be "wife of Constantine"—that is to say, she is identified with Helena the mother, not the wife, of Constantine the Great. Nevertheless in this same Toldoth form (*e.g.* in

¹ In which Jesus is condemned and executed under Herod the Great!

V.) we find that these things took place in the time of Tiberius and Herod II., while the teacher of Miriam's husband is still given as Simeon ben Shetach, and we are further told that the land had been left in the hand of Helene, "after Nebucadnezzar, King of Babylon, that is seventy years before the destruction of the Temple" (so also the Leipzig MS.).

Here is a magnificent tangle to unravel. What can it all mean? The Toldoth give us a new date-indication, but while giving it with one hand, they immediately snatch it away with the other. As far as the Christian elements are concerned, it is easy to understand how that in course of time the confused tradition of the Jews could not stand against the persistent and ever growing more consistent and uniform Christian tradition, and how that gradually some of the later Toldoth scribes were so influenced by it, that they accepted it and wove it into their legendary patchwork, though in so doing they involved themselves in the greatest contradiction with their predecessors, and could never succeed entirely in erasing all trace of the Ben Perachiah data.

What, however, seems to have most greatly puzzled Queen Helene. those innovating scribes was the mention of Queen Helene; in fact, so hopelessly confused were some of them that, as we have seen, they had no hesitation in affirming that Helene was the wife of Constantine; even a so transparent fiction as this insensate anachronism, with a Nebuchadnezzar thrown in, could not spoil their literary digestion, unless—and this, after all, may perhaps be the means of unravelling the most complicated part of the tangle—it was a jest and known

to be one by every Jewish schoolboy. It is more than probable that there may be a grim humour behind some of those wild anachronisms, and that it is a waste of energy to expend our marks of exclamation on the stupidity of the legend-weavers.

For if we have to take seriously such manifest contradictions in one and the same sentence, it would be an egregious compliment to characterize such statements as simply betraying a total lack of any sense of history; if they were seriously meant they can be classed only with the productions of a lunatic asylum, and the general irresponsibility of mediæval legend-making would have to blush for its incompetency before the magnificent and gorgeous spectacle of such transcendental irrationality.

Krauss' Un-
satisfactory
Theory.

It is true that Helena was the subject of a prolific legend-activity in the Middle Ages, principally because of the "finding of the cross" saga. But why Krauss should solemnly take this as his point of departure, and endeavour to show that the Helene element of the Toldoth was begotten of the Helena legends, is somewhat of a matter of surprise; for it is very evident that if in one of the "wife of Constantine" type of Toldoth recensions there is reference to "the finding of the cross," this incident was added either by some utterly ignorant scribe, or by some humorist to cap the joke, for it could not have been that any intelligent Jew could have been so foolish as to have seriously imported the figure of Saint Helena, whose faith in Jesus not only never wavered but was of the most transcendent type, out of the Christian legends, and have converted her, of all people in the world, into the

queen before whom the trial of Jesus took place, and who finally hands him over to the Jews to do with him as they would.

The Helene element is not a subsidiary matter of no special importance in the Toldoth, it is not even of only secondary consideration; far from it, it is one of the main elements of the whole story. If there is any ancient element in the Toldoth, it is precisely the figure of this queen, before whom the most dramatic and critical incidents of the whole story take place. It is impossible not to believe that there was the mention of some queen in the oldest deposit of the Toldoth-saga, and difficult to believe that the name given her in it was anything else than Helene.

The Helene
Element very
Old.

The writer of the Toldoth recension printed by Wagenseil, however, seems to have had no doubt who this Helene was, for after telling us that Jesus was born in the 671st year of the fourth millennium (*ab orbe condito*)—that is 93 B.C.,¹ in the reign of King Jannai who was also called Alexander, he goes on to say that this Queen Helene “was the wife of the before-mentioned Jannai, who held the sovereignty after the death of her husband. She is called by another name Oleina, and had a son King Munbasus, otherwise called Hyrcanus.”

Oleina.

I say the writer “seems” to have no doubt who this Helene was, because the last sentence presents us with a new difficulty. It is true that Hyrcanus II. was the eldest son of Jannai, but Monobaz II. was the son, not of Jannai, but of Helene, Queen of Adiabene, a small

Helen of
Adiabene.

¹ See Krauss, pp. 182, 273, n. 3, who also suggests that the 3670 of Bischoff's Judæo-German Toldoth is a mistake for 3760.

province of Mesopotamia, on the Tigris, who became a Jewish proselyte somewhere about 30 A.D., and spent some fourteen years (c. 46-60 A.D.) in Palestine, at Jerusalem and Lydda (Lud), under a Nazarite vow, consorting with the Rabbis of Hillel's school.¹ It is also true that Helen of Adiabene and her sons had endeared themselves to the Jews by devotion to the Torah and rich gifts to the Temple; but that it could ever have been seriously imagined that the sovereignty of the land of Palestine could have been in this Helen's hand, as is usually stated in the Toldoth when the Toldoth Helene is mentioned, is unthinkable.

Is "Monobaz" a Gloss?

How, then, can we possibly explain such contradictory data coming in one and the same sentence? Is it another jest of the same nature as the one to which we have already referred? In this case it does not seem to be so. If not, can Monobaz be a gloss inserted by some later scribe, for this absurdity can hardly be set down to the account of the Toldoth redactor himself, who in every other respect is so precise concerning the date? May it not then be that this scribe, being like the redactor puzzled as to the name Helene, for he knows that this was not the historical name of the wife of Jannai, desired to add his own mite of information? He is an ignorant man, yet he knows of Helen of Adiabene and her son Monobaz; he accordingly flings this in to show his reading, without stopping to think whether the dates coincide or not. Perhaps, however,

¹ Josephus, "Antiqq.," xx. 2. 1-3. See art. "Helene, Königin," in Hamburger's "Real-Encyclopädie des Judentums" (2nd imp. Neustrelitz; 1896), and also art. "Adiabene" in the new "Jewish Encyclopædia" (New York; 1901).

after all he is not to be blamed, for the great commentator Raschi himself, in the twelfth century, took Monobaz for a Hasmonæan.¹ Was there by any chance another Monobaz?

But if this Oleina-Helene was neither the mother of Constantine nor the Adiabene Helen, who else could she have been for the Jews but the wife of Jannai? The only queen of the Jews in whose hand was all the land was Jannai's wife Salome, who, as we have seen in the chapter on "The Talmud 100 Years B.C. Story of Jesus," was sole ruler of the Jews from 78-69 B.C.,² and who died at the age of seventy-two. This Salome is said to have been the sister of Simeon ben Shetach, who in most of the Toldoth recensions is given as the teacher of the wronged husband of Miriam.

Helene-Salome.

Unfortunately, the historical Greek name of this queen is Alexandra (presumably after her husband's Greek name Alexander), and not Helena or Helene. It is, however, to be noticed that both in Greek and Latin the name Salome is given as Salina.³ Now we have already seen that name-play was a frequent device of the Talmud story-tellers; not only so, but it had for centuries been a favourite occupation of the scribes of the Old Covenant documents, and for a matter of that a peculiarity of the Semitic genius generally. The oldest deposit of the Toldoth belongs, as we have seen, to the same sea of oral tradition as that from which

¹ "Baba Bathra," 11a. See Krauss, p. 274, n. 5.

² According to Schürer; Krauss, however, gives Jannai's reign as 103-76 B.C. (p. 182), and the new "Jewish Encyclopædia" (art. "Alexandra") says that Salome died in 67 B.C.

³ See for references Schürer's "History of the Jewish People" (Edinburgh; 1897), Div. i, vol. i. p. 308, n.

the Talmud derived. Can we, then, have in Helene a name-transformation of this nature ?¹

Helene-
Selene.

Salina helps us somewhat, for it is not so far from Helena (Oleina, Hilani, etc.), and *s* and *h* are philologically interchangeable. But in this connection there is a well-known instance of name-play which will help us still further. It is well known to all students of Christian origins that a certain Helen (*Gk.* Helene, *Lat.* Helena) was fabled to have been a harlot whom Simon Magus took about with him ; Simon himself said that his Helen was the Sophia, but that is another story. Now in the Simon legends this Helene is also called in Greek Selene, the "Moon," while in the Simonian myth Simon (Shimeon, Shemesh) himself corresponds with the "Sun." Thus in Augustine ("De Hær.," i.) and elsewhere we find Selene and not Helene, while in the Clementine Recognitions (ii. 14), preserved to us only in the Latin translation of Rufinus, we find the name of the syzygy of Simon, who in the parallel passage of the Greek Clementine Homilies (ii. 23) is called Helena, given as Luna. From this we deduce that Helene is a play on Selene either for mystical or controversial purposes, for with the Ben Pandera instance before us we can readily see how that in those days of feverish theological polemics, a mystic teaching could easily be turned into a personal scandalous legend for controversial purposes.

The Simon
Magus
Legend.

If, then, Selene could be transformed into Helene for

¹ Salome's full Jewish name was Shalom Zion ; for Hebrew and Aramaic transformations of this queen's name, see Derenbourg (J.), "Essai sur l'Histoire et la Géographie de la Palestine, d'après les Thalmuds," etc. (Paris ; 1867), p. 102, n.

some such purposes, why could not Salina (Salome) be so transformed for purposes of a somewhat similar nature? Whether or not this suggestion of ours may in any way be helped by the fact that the air-battle between Jesus and Judas in the Toldoth has also its exact parallel in the contest between Simon Peter and Simon Magus in the Simonian legends, is a secondary question. As to the quaint coincidence that Helene-Salome had a brother Simon (b. Shetach), I hardly dare mention it, were it not that legends are the most insatiate of prostitutes, and will unite with anything that takes their fancy.

It is in vain to ask why precisely such a name-change should have been made; or why if Salome was converted into Helene the names of Joshua ben Perachiah and Simeon ben Shetach were not also changed. Consistency and precise reasons are not to be expected in the arbitrary development of folk-tale. The least that can be said is that our hypothesis involves us in less difficulties than the Helen of Constantine and the Helen of Monobaz conjectures; while if our supposition should be thought to hold good, it would point to the fact that the overwhelming preponderance of Toldoth tradition is on the side of the Ben Perachiah date.

Pros and Cons
of the Argu-
ment.

But it may be said, granted that this hypothesis would explain the otherwise inexplicable statement that the rule of the land was in the hand of Helene, it does not explain why this Helene is represented as being so wavering, now believing in Jeschu, now on the side of the wise men of Jewry, and, above all, why she speaks to the doctors of the Law, as one not only unlearned in

their scriptures, but as apparently being a non-Jewess. "Is this written in *your* Law?" she asks, whereas Salome was regarded as the champion of the Pharisees and a most devout Jewess.

But the dispute is between the learned, between the teachers and one who dares to expound Halachoth without their permission; the first part of this objection can, therefore, have no great weight, for the queen, even if learned in the Law, could not have appeared to be so in the presence of the wise men of Jewry. The second part of this objection is far more difficult to meet, and can only be met on the supposition that the Salome date is correct and that she *did* favour Jesus; for if she did so, as a historic fact, it would be natural for the later Rabbis to seek to excuse their favourite queen, in whose reign they placed the "golden age" of Pharisaism, and to represent her part in the proceedings as that of one unacquainted with the Law; and in order to do this with safety it would be natural for them to change her name from Salome to Helene. Can this supposition possibly contain some hint at the reason for which we previously said it was vain to ask?

But this, the convinced believer in the Christian canonical tradition will say, is a magnificent begging of the whole question, a speculating on the impossible. Even so, it is as well to argue both sides, for that many generations of Jews have believed unquestioningly in this Joshua ben Perachiah date is evident from both the Talmud and Toldoth; it is therefore legitimate to try and explain the developments of tradition on their own premisses, among which the Jannai date is most conspicuous. Indeed, if we step outside the

fantastic circle of the legends themselves, and seek information on this point from serious students of history, we are confronted with the categorical statement of the Spanish history-writer Abraham ben Daūd, who about 1100 A.D. writes as follows:

"The Jewish history-writers say that Joshua ben Perachiah was the teacher of Jeschu ha-Notzri, according to which the latter lived in the days of King Jannai; the history-writers of the other nations, however, say that he was born in the days of Herod and was hanged in the days of his son Archelaus. This is a great difference, a difference of more than 110 years."¹

The Date according to the Jewish History-writers.

Ibn Daūd evidently calculates this difference from the beginning of the reign of Jannai, but the exact number of years is of no consequence. Abraham makes a general declaration of the difference between the statements of Jewish and Christian writers; that is to say, he gives us the general impression he has on the matter. It is true that already in the ninth century we meet with a Toldoth form which introduces John the Baptist, Tiberius and Pilate, but evidently, in the opinion of Abraham ben Daūd, *the Jewish tradition* was the 100 years B.C. date.

On the whole, therefore, we are inclined to the opinion that the amazing contradictions of the various Toldoth recensions as to their date-indications, are more easily explained on the supposition that the Ben Perachiah tradition was the only date-factor of the older Toldoth writers, and hence the contradictions were a later development, as Jewish tradition weakened before

The Date according to the Earliest Toldoth-writers.

¹ Neubauer, "Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles" (Oxford; 1887), p. 53. See Krauss, pp. 183, 273, n. 3.

the persistent strength of the Christian canonical tradition. In any case, we think that we have found a simpler solution of the Helene puzzle than the theory of Krauss, who would trace its source to the Christian legends of St Helena.

It is true that in the bitterest days of persecution some of the Jews argued that there were two persons of the name of Jesus mentioned in the Talmud; but as Krauss points out (p. 273, n. 4), this is as unproved as is the argument that Ben Stada and Ben Pandera were two different people.

The Ben
Perachiah
Date is prob-
ably the
Earliest.

If, then, we are correct in our impression that the Ben Perachiah date was an intergal part of the oldest deposit of the Toldoth, it seems more probable that in this the Toldoth did not copy from the Talmud, but that this element came into both the Talmud and Toldoth from a floating mass of oral tradition from which both drew. In this connection also it is of interest to note that the Karaites, who were absolutely opposed to all Rabbinic authority, and utterly rejected the Talmudic tradition, nevertheless retained the Ben Pandera tradition, though they knew nothing of Ben Stada. Not only so, but Toldoth circulated among them, for in Codex de Rossi 96 we have a distinctly Karaite Toldoth.¹

There are many other points of interest connected with the Toldoth legends, but they do not immediately concern us in our present enquiry; as, however, we have presented the reader with a translation of one of the Toldoth recensions, we might subjoin a few very brief remarks on one or two of its most salient features.

¹ See Krauss, pp. 15, 31, 200 ff.

It is to be remarked that Miriam the mother is in nearly every form of Toldoth exonerated from any conscious breaking of her marriage vows. The bastardy of Jeschu was the result of a trick played upon her. Can we assign any motive for this? Can it possibly be that the original framers of this legend knew that it was no handing on of history, but the popularization of a doctrinal controversy? Indeed, not only is Mary excused from any conscious breaking of the Law, but from several forms of the Toldoth we glean that she was regarded as a woman of distinction. Not only is she said to have been the sister of a certain Joshua, who is presumably to be identified with Joshua ben Perachiah, but she is also said to have been related to Queen Helene, that is, if our argument holds good, to Queen Salome, whose brother was Simeon ben Shetach. Here we have the close relationship of Jesus to the most distinguished Rabbis of the time.

The Exoneration of Miriam.

It is further to be remarked that Jesus is throughout always represented as a learned man, and so generally are his disciples. This might seem at first sight to be accounted for by the fact that much space is given in the Toldoth to the "proof from scripture." But in my opinion these Messianic disputations seem to be due to later developments, and to be part and parcel of doctrinal polemics between Jews and Judæo-Christians; for I have never been able to believe that historically Jesus himself could have made any claim to be the Messiah. If the power of the great teacher, round whose transcendent person all these marvellous traditions and disputes have grown up, is rightly held to have been the power of a Master of Wisdom, not to speak of

Did Jesus claim to be the Messiah?

still more transcendent claims put forward on his behalf, then it can hardly be believed that he would have claimed to be what he could have foreseen would never be admitted by those to whom the Messianic tradition chiefly belonged. True, he may very well have taught a more universal view of Messianism, but that he should have claimed to have been the Messiah of prophecy, in any sense in which the Jews could have understood the idea, without that prophecy turning out to be a bitter mockery, can hardly be believed of a wise and merciful Teacher. Jesus of Nazareth has in no sense been a Messiah to the Jews; and it is hardly in keeping with the idea of the Good God preached by him, to talk of the Jews having been punished for their rejection of Jesus. Not to speak of Deity, those who are truly wise, even as the average man can imagine wisdom, must have foreseen the rejection before the sending of the messenger. Surely, then, Jesus would not have said, "I am the Messiah" to those to whom he knew he, or rather that which men would make of his efforts, would never be a help, but a scourge; not that he would have had it so, but because of the forces which already existed in human nature and which were destined to focus themselves in Jew and Gentile for some high purpose of the Divine economy.

If we can hold such a view without giving dire offence to the better feeling in both Jew and Christian, then the Messianic controversy can have had nothing to do with the original teaching of Jesus himself. It was not because of this facility of quotation that Jesus was held to be a learned man by Jewish legend. Rather was it that such legend was itself

based on ancient tradition among them that he was learned in their lore.

Not only so, but the Jews had no difficulty in admitting his power of wonder-doing. Their earliest tradition, however, seems to have been that the knowledge whereby these deeds were done was learned in Egypt. Popular belief would then naturally have it that if this gnosis was learned in Egypt, it must have been the acquiring of certain "words of power," and if "words" then "names." In the developed Toldoth, however, we find that the Egypt element has retired well into the background, while the "words of power" appear as the Shem ha-Mephoresh or Holy Name, and the Shrines of Egypt as the Sanctuary at Jerusalem. The Shem.

The "brick-bat" which Jesus is jestingly accused of worshipping in the Talmud, appears in the Toldoth as the "foundation-stone" in the Holy of Holies, the prototype of both being probably some symbol of the Egyptian mystery-tradition, that "corner stone" or "key," the mystic writing on which was to be inscribed in the "heart." As we have already suggested, the "heart" was to be "circumcised"—hence the cutting of the flesh and the rest of the folk-legend. This mystic stone was in the Holy of Holies, beyond the pillars, which were guarded by appropriate wardens, a symbolism familiar enough to the student of Masonry and its predecessors. Mystic
Masonry.

Much might be written on this most fascinating subject, but it would extend our essay to a too great length; it is enough here to say that, in protection of their own interests, the Mishnaic Rabbis considered the utterer of the Shem as a blasphemer, and the punish-

ment of such blasphemy was decided upon as death.¹ The Shem element, therefore, could thus subsequently be made to work in most conveniently with the Toldoth patchwork, for it supplied an additional reason for the putting to death of Jesus.

YHWH. In spiritual mysticism the knowing of names meant simply the possession of powers; while in material magic it was believed that the possession of the actual spoken name gave the man the power of the "name." It is somewhat interesting to see how the Jews gradually worked these ideas into their system of monotheistic exclusiveness, and how the mystery of the Shem ha-Mephoresh, or "distinctive name," YHWH, was developed among them. As to how this name was originally pronounced we have now no authentic information. But "in the early period of the Second Temple the Name was still in common use. . . . At the beginning of the Hellenistic era, however, the use of the Name was reserved for the Temple, . . . elsewhere they were obliged to use the appellative name 'Adonai' (Lord)."

The Evolution of
Mystery.

Thus the pronunciation of a name once in common use gradually became more and more mysterious, and at the beginning of the Christian era we find Philo writing ("Life of Moses," iii. 11): "The four letters² may be mentioned or heard only by holy men whose ears and tongues are purified by wisdom, and by no other in any place whatsoever."

While Josephus, at the end of the first century, gives the current myth of the name-giving as follows :

"Moses besought God to impart to him the know-

¹ "Mishna, Sanhedrin," vii. 5 (55b).

² The Tetragrammaton YHWH.

ledge of His name and its pronunciation, so that he might be able to invoke Him by name at the sacred acts, whereupon God communicated His name, hitherto unknown to any man; and it would be a sin for me to mention it."

In course of time the pronunciation of the Name even by the Temple priests fell into disuse, and the manner of its pronunciation at length "became a secret entrusted only to the Kasherim (worthy ones), or the Zena'im (Essenes='the humble or chaste ones'), but withheld from the frivolous, the Hellenists (Peruzim); and even the former were taught it only once every seven years, and then only after due purification and sanctification. . . . 'Woe unto you, ye Pharisees, who pronounce the Holy Name each morning without due purification!' said the Hemerobaptists; whereupon the Pharisees sarcastically replied: 'Woe upon you who pronounce the Holy Name with an organ of the body, while your body itself is unholy!' However, it appears from Ta'anit 19*a* and 'Ab. Zarah 18*a*, that the Essene saints made use of the Name in their invocations and miraculous cures, which was afterwards declared to be a grievous sin ('Sanh.,' x. i.; compare, also 'Book of Wisdom,' xiv. 21)."¹

Now as in all probability Jesus was an Essene, and the Essene saints seem in his days to have used the Shem without let or hindrance, we can only conclude that the Toldoth accusation of an illegitimate use of the Shem by Jesus must proceed at earliest from the days when the Rabbis were more and more jealously guarding (or even creating) their rights and privileges, that is to

The Shem
Story a Later
Development.

¹ See Kohler's art. "Adonai" in "Jewish Encyclopædia."

say, from Mishnaic times. It follows, therefore, that if the Essene saints used the Shem without let or hindrance, Jesus could not historically have been accused on this count, and therefore the general charge of "magic" learned in Egypt must be held to have been the older form of accusation. And with regard to this, all that can be said is that it originated in the fact that Jesus had been to Egypt, the only probable historical element in the whole matter.

The Fight in
the Air.

The magical fight in the air between Judas and Jeschu is paralleled not only in the Simonian legends, where the *dramatis personæ* are Simon Magus and Simon Peter, but also in the Jerusalem Targum, or Aramaic translation of the Torah and its accompanying Midrashim, where we are told that when Phinehas decided to slay Balaam, the latter on seeing his pursuer "resorted to witchcraft and flew up in the air, but Phinehas made use of the Holy Name, seized him by the head," and slew him with the sword.¹

We have already seen that in the Talmud Balaam is one of the synonyms of Jesus; is it, then, that here too in the Targum Balaam stands for Jesus, and that both Targum and Toldoth depend on a common source of oral tradition, or was the Targum haggada the origin of this particular Toldoth element?

The Hanging
on the
Cabbage-
stalk.

Another point of great interest in the Toldoth is that Jesus is never said to have been crucified. He is stoned or hanged, or first stoned and then hanged, or hanged in the stoning place. What, further, is the meaning of the hanging on a miraculous "cabbage-

¹ "Targum Yer.," to Num. xxxi. 8; see also "Sanh.," 106b. See Kohler's art. "Balaam" in "Jewish Encyclopædia."

stalk"? It is perhaps almost impossible to conjecture any explanation, but I cannot get rid of the impression that there may have originally been some mystical tradition behind it, perhaps connected with the "tree of life," the tree that grows from the "mustard seed," connected also with the "dark stalk" which grew in Eridu, the Hidden Abode of the God of Wisdom, of the Chaldæan creation-tablet found in the Temple library of Kuta, dating from the fourth millennium B.C.¹; but this is, of course, pure conjecture.

With regard to the casting of the body into a "canal," it is to be noticed that in some forms of the Toldoth this canal is given as a public place for refuse. Can it then possibly be that Jesus was stoned, and his body hanged on a stake as a warning, according to the legal regulations of the Torah, and that then the body was cast out into the common dust-heap of the city? Who can conjecture with any historic probability in such a chaos of legendary fantasy? The "Canal."

We will now turn our attention to Epiphanius, and what he has to say concerning the earliest Christians, and to the riddle he sets us to solve by a hitherto absolutely unintelligible statement concerning the date of Jesus.

¹ See the "Temples of the Orient" (London; 1902), p. 85.

XVII.—ON THE TRACKS OF THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS.

The Origin
of the Name
Christian.

IT is very certain that the name "Christiani" was not a title given by the early followers of Jesus to themselves. Indeed, we find it still unused by a series of Christian writers of the first half of the second century at a time when it was employed, though perhaps not invariably in its subsequently restricted sense, by Pliny the Younger in 112 A.D., by Tacitus 116-117 A.D., and by Suetonius in 120 A.D. These Christian writers were content to designate the early communities of their co-believers by such expressions as: "brethren," "saints," "elect," "called," "they that believed," "faithful," "disciples," "they that are in Christ," "they that are in the Lord," and "of the way."¹

Its Use in the
Acts.

Even in the New Covenant writings which subsequently became canonical, we meet with the designation only three times, and always in a connection which suggests that it was a name given from without, and not as yet adopted from within. The redactor of the Acts (xi. 29) believed—*c.* 130-150 A.D.—that "the disciples" were first called "Christiani" at Antioch, at

¹ See Schmiedel's article "Christian, Name of," in the "Encyclopædia Biblica."

the time of the ministry of Paul and Barnabas in that city, that is, as he supposed, at the time of the founding of the first Gentile church there.

In the same document (xxvi. 28) we also meet with the curious remark attributed to Herod Agrippa, which is translated in the A.V. as: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," but the imperfect original of which is untranslatable¹; where it is to be remarked that although Agrippa was not a pure Jew, it is hardly to be supposed he would have used such a term.

While in the earlier pseudepigraph I. Peter (iv. 16) In I. Peter. we read: "But if [any man suffer] as a Christianus, let him not be ashamed, but let him give glory to God in this name," it is not clear what precise meaning should be given to the words "in this name"; but certainly the gloss of the A.V. "in this behalf" is not satisfactory. The followers of Jesus had apparently hitherto been "ashamed" of being called "Christiani"; for the meaning can hardly be that the condemned should give thanks because he suffers as a Christian in the later honourable sense of the term, but rather suggests some such idea as: We are accused of being "Messianists," and therefore revolutionaries against the Roman authority, but in reality it is we who are the true observers of the moral law; our revolution is in morals and not in politics, and therefore let us give thanks to God as His "Anointed" or the "followers of His Anointed," who are unjustly accused.

In any case it is evident that the title "those of the Messiah" was not given to the followers of Jesus by A Pagan Designation.

¹ See Westcott and Hort's Introduction (Cambridge and London; 1881), p. 100.

the Jews, for this would have been to admit what they so strenuously denied concerning the founder of the new faith. It is, therefore, highly probable that the name *Christiani* was first used by the Pagans to signify Messianists of all kinds, and was only finally adopted by the followers of Jesus in their public dealings with the Pagans, presumably first in apologetic literature, where we find it of frequent occurrence from about the second quarter of the second century.

Date of
Origin.

As for the time when the Pagan term "*Christiani*" arose, it is to be presumed that it came into use with the ever more and more desperate attempts of the Jews to shake off the Roman yoke, that is to say, subsequently to the downfall of Jerusalem, which is generally dated 70 A.D., but which some Jewish authorities give as 68 A.D. Schmiedel is of opinion that the date of origin of its use cannot with any assurance be placed earlier than 79 A.D., that is presumably the first year of Titus.

An answer to this most obscure question can only be found from a critical examination of the history of "*Christian*" persecutions; but even so, we are still left without any certainty. After a searching examination of the confused data, and a brilliant criticism of the conservative position of Mommsen, Sybel, Neumann and Ramsay, Schmiedel can arrive at no positive conclusion, and finally writes: "On the question as to the date at which Christianity first began to be recognized as a distinct religion, we must confess ourselves completely at a loss. Only this much is certain, that it had come about before the time of Pliny's governorship."

The Notzrim.

But if the Jews did not know the followers of Jesus

as Christiani, by what name did they know them? To the Jews the Christians, when not classed under the general term Minim or heretics, were and are Notzrim. The writer of the Acts is aware of this when he makes a Jew accuse Paul of being "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (A.V.)—that is, of the "hæresis of the Nazoræi"; and that this was the general designation of the Christians by the Jews is testified to by Tertullian¹ at the end of the second century, and by Jerome at the end of the fourth.² While Justin (c. 145–150 A.D.) tells us that the Jews in their synagogues publicly cursed the "Christians," Epiphanius (c. 375 A.D.) says that this curse was directed against the "Nazoræi." Jerome, on the contrary, will have it that the curse was pronounced against the Minæi³; whereas, as we have frequently remarked before, Minim is not to be taken as identical with Notzrim. Minim is a general term for heretics, not only in a bad but even in a good sense, and Notzrim would therefore come under the term but not be identical with it.

It is therefore of interest to try to discover, if it be possible, the meaning of this term Notzrim, and to find out why it was that Jesus is generally distinguished among the Jews from others of the same name as Jeschu ha-Notzri.

¹ "Adv. Marc.," 48.

² Hier., in Jes. ch. v. 18 f. ; xlix. 7 ; lii. 5.

³ Hieron., "Epist. ad August.": "There is to-day among the Jews throughout all the synagogues of the East a heresy which is called [the heresy] of the Minæi, and is even until this day cursed by the Pharisees; these Minæans are commonly called Nazoræans, and they believe in Christ, the Son of God. . . . But while they will be both Jews and Christians, they are neither Jews nor Christians."

The Meaning
of Nazareth.

The accepted Christian tradition, it need hardly be said, is that Jesus Nazoræus means simply Jesus of Nazareth, his place of origin. It is, however, well known to all scholars that very great difficulties are presented by the contradictory statements of the canonical accounts, and that so far no generally accepted ground of reconciliation between the rival claims of the traditional Nazareth and the prophetically necessitated Bethlehem has been found.

There is, however, one hypothesis whereby much of the pressure may be relieved, and which is therefore deserving of our closest attention. In the first place it is to be noticed that even in the canonical account there is still preserved the very interesting trace that Nazareth was regarded by some as the "native country" (*πατρίς*), not town, of Jesus; and in the second it has lately been argued, not only that Nazareth (or, perhaps, more correctly Nazara) was not a town or village, but a district or country, but, further, most probably this district was Galilee.¹

Bethlehem-
Nazareth.

It is therefore suggested that perhaps in the earliest form of the evangelical tradition the term Bethlehem-Nazareth—that is, Bethlehem of (or in) Galilee—was found, and that this being misunderstood, especially by Gentile converts, in course of time some said that Jesus was born at Bethlehem, others at Nazareth. We thus find in the more developed forms of the tradition some incidents woven round Bethlehem, others round Nazareth, and scriptural authority was sought to authenticate either view.

¹ See Cheyne's article, "Nazareth," in the "Enc. Bib.," which elaborates the theory first mooted by the great Jewish authority Grätz.

May it not, however, be that the whole idea of Bethlehem owed its origin to the "proof from scripture"? Bethlehem was necessitated by "prophecy";¹ it *must* have been the place of birth, for in those days, if history did not fit with prophecy it had to go to the wall. Although, then, the prophecy-fulfilling writer of the first gospel could not have dreamed of giving up the prophetic Bethlehem, nevertheless he inconsistently supports the presumably simple historical Nazareth tradition by further prophecy when saying (ii. 23): "He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene (Nazoræus)." This passage, as is well known, has given rise to endless discussion, for no such prophecy is to be found in the Old Testament. Some earlier commentators, it is true, were of opinion that it refers to the prophetic "shoot" (*netzer*) which should arise out of Jesse (Isaiah xi. 1); and that this was the explanation put forward by Jewish Christians of the early centuries may be seen from the Talmud passage concerning the five disciples. It must, however, be confessed that a so far-fetched derivation of the name appears little short of fantastic to the modern mind, and quite beneath the dignity of Scripture.²

The whole of this apparently hopeless tangle, how- Nazareth=
Galilee.

¹ "Micah," v. 2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee there shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."

² Krauss (pp. 253-255) suggests the derivation of Nazareth from a word meaning "splinter" or "chip," and in this, apparently, would find a reason for the use of the term *Jeschu ha-Notzri* among the Jews, it being a play on the word "carpenter." See also Cheyne's art. "Joseph" (§ 9) in "Enc. Bib."

ever, begins to unravel itself if we can be persuaded that the simple historical fact was that Jesus was a Galilean; whether so-called because he was actually born in Galilee, or because the chief scene of his public ministry was among that very mixed population, and many of his earliest followers were Galileans,¹ here matters little. We know further from several sources that the Christians were originally called Galileans,² and it is said that Julian the Emperor (360–363 A.D.) desired to have them so called again, and in his own writings he invariably refers to them under this designation.

The Galileans. Does, then, the general term Notzrim used by the Jews for the Christians mean simply Galileans, and did Jeschu ha-Notzri originally signify simply Jesus of Galilee ?

The
"Nazoræans
or Chris-
tians,"

In any case we see that, according to the writer of the Acts, the Christians of Paul's time were called Nazoræi (Notzrim) by the Jews, and we have also the emphatic declaration of Epiphanius that the earliest followers of Jesus were so designated. In his encyclopædic "Panarium," in which he most vigorously attacks all heresies, that is, every form of religious belief, or even philosophy, but what he held to be the true teaching of Christianity, the Bishop of Constantia (the ancient Salamis) in Cyprus heads the concluding para-

¹ See Acts i. 11 and ii. 7. Justin Martyr ("Dial. c. Tryph.," lxxx.), moreover, knows of a pre-Christian sect called Galileans, which, however, most scholars identify with the followers of the Zealot Judas the Galilean, who led a revolt in 6 or 7 A.D.

² For instance, Epictetus, who died about 117 A.D., calls the Christians Galileans ("Dissertatt.," iv. 7); Mani, in the third century, calls the general Christians Galileans (Fabricius, "Bib. Græc.," v. 285); Suidas (*s.v.* "Christiani") says that the Christians were first called Nazarenes or Galileans.

graph of his first volume, "Concerning the Nazoræans or Christians" ("Hær.," xx. 4).

It is somewhat difficult to make out the precise sense of this paragraph; for Epiphanius first of all again identifies the Nazoræans and Christians, and then goes on to speak of "that which was for a short time called Christianity by the Jews, and by the Apostles themselves, when Peter says 'Jesus Nazoræus,' etc." (quoting from Acts ii. 22), where we should expect to read, instead of "Christianism," "Nazoræanism," for he continues: "but was first called Christianity at Antioch." This was the true religion, but under an improper name, for "there is properly a heresy of the Nazoræi," about which he promises to tell us in its right place in the sequel.

When, however, he comes to deal with these heretical The Jessæans. Nazoræans ("Hær.," xxix. 1), he confesses that he does not really know exactly where to place them, whether before, or contemporary with, or later than some early schools of the end of the first century which he has just been attacking; he says they were all of about the same date and held the same views. They do not call themselves after the name Christus or Jesus, but simply Nazoræi, and, he adds, "all Christians were at that time in like fashion called Nazoræi." For a short time, however, the Christians also called themselves Jessæans (Iessæi). Whence this name was derived, whether from Jesse, the father of David, or from the name Jesus, which, Epiphanius says, signifies in Hebrew the same as the Greek "Therapeutes," or "healer" or "saviour," he is not sure, but he is very certain they were so called ("Hær.," xxix. 4).

Whether or not in this, as in much else of his vast heresiological undertaking, the Bishop of Constantia is giving us the speculations of his own "pure phantasy," based on vague hearsay, as Lipsius supposes,¹ or that more credit is to be given to his confusing indications, as Hilgenfeld seems to admit,² has not yet been definitely decided by modern scholarship. We are, therefore, at liberty to enquire for ourselves, not with any hope of deciding the question, for any attempt to do so would require a huge volume even for preliminaries, but with the sole purpose of directing the reader's attention to some points of special interest in the confused Refutation of the over-zealous Church Father.

Value of
Epiphanius.

Epiphanius is a curious writer, who deserves more attention than has so far been bestowed upon him, and it is somewhat a reproach to scholarship that as yet he has never been translated into any modern tongue. He attacks indiscriminately, and often misrepresents, every school of thought and belief of which he has read or heard; yet here and there, in spite of himself, he lets drop a valuable scrap of information which none of his predecessors in heresy-hunting have handed on to us. We should remember that this "antidote" to the "poison of the hydra-headed serpents of error," as he is never tired of calling the objects of his onslaught, was composed from 374 to 376 or 377 A.D., that is to say, just half a century after the initial triumph of Nicene Christianity, and as far as Epiphanius was concerned, he was

¹ Lipsius (R. A.), "Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius" (Wien; 1865), pp. 122-151.

² Hilgenfeld (A.), "Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristenthums" (Leipzig; 1884), index, s. *vocc.* Jessei, Osseni, Nazoræi, etc.

determined that no mercy should be shown to any dissenter, even though his dissent may have been absolutely unconscious, seeing that most of Epiphanius' "dissenters" had lived and thought at a date when Nicene Christianity was either inchoate, or even non-existent. The rush of Epiphanius is so furious that we find him not unfrequently over-reaching himself; he sometimes even blindly blunders into his own friends and disarrays their ranks. The "mistakes" of Epiphanius are accordingly nearly always of deep psychological interest directly, and indirectly are sometimes of great historical value.

Thus there is much to interest us in what is generally considered to be his Issæan blunder. Epiphanius identifies his Issæans with the Essenes, and of this there can be no doubt, for he tells the "studious reader" ("Hær.," xxix. 5), that if he would know more about them, he will find it in the memoirs of Philo, and especially in the book which that famous Alexandrian had entitled "Concerning the Issæi"; after which Epiphanius proceeds to give the main outlines of this treatise in such a way as to leave no doubt that he is quoting from Philo's famous tractate, "On the Contemplative Life." In this treatise it is true that Philo calls the very interesting community which had its monasteria on the southern shore of Lake Mareotis, south of Alexandria, as well as all their allied communities in Egypt and elsewhere, Therapeuts; but in his opening words he distinctly informs us that he had already, presumably in another tractate now lost,¹ treated of

The Thera-
peuts.

¹ For what he tells us of them in his tract, "Quod Omnis Probus Liber," one of his earlier works, most probably written before

the "Essæi who followed the practical life," the communities in Palestine and Arabia, who in Philo's opinion did not soar to such a lofty height of philosophic and mystic endeavour as the members of the community near Alexandria with which he was specially acquainted, and which he characterized as "those of the Essæi who devote themselves to the life of contemplation." ¹

The Name
Essene.

It is, therefore, held that Epiphanius has simply read Essæi as Issæi, and that this explains the whole difficulty. Now it is well known that the name Essene is one of the greatest puzzles of scholarship; upwards of twenty derivations have been given by ancient and modern writers, and the riddle still remains unsolved. The greatest difficulty is that we cannot find any general term, or even special term, in use in Hebrew or Aramaic for those whom such Hellenized Jews as Philo and Josephus call Essenes. Philo calls them "Essæi," Pliny the Elder (†79 A.D.) speaks of them as "Hesenes," while Josephus (75-100 A.D.) gives the name as "Essēni." ² Philo, in "Q. O. P. L.," thinks that the name Essaioi is simply a (? Jewish) corruption of the Greek 'Osioi, the saints, while in "D. V. C." he makes it equivalent to Therapeuts, that is, Healers, or Servants (of God).

20 A.D., can be regarded only as a summary from some lost treatise.

¹ See my "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten" (London; 1900), pp. 66-86, where a translation is given from the critical text published by Conybeare in 1895.

² For the most objective article on the general subject, see Conybeare's article in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible" (Edinburgh; 1898).

Epiphanius, as we have already seen, follows Philo and adopts the latter derivation, but why he has changed Essæi into Issæi is the puzzle. The Bishop of Salamis knew some Hebrew; was it, then, because he thought that Issæi was the preferable transliteration of the Hebrew original, if, indeed, there was a Hebrew original? Or was it that, having claimed these Essæans as the first Christians, as he emphatically does ("Hær.," xxix. 5), he found himself in great difficulty to account for the name, as it evidently, on the face of it, had nothing to do with Jesus, or Christus, or Nazareth, seeing that he knew its variant was Esseni, which he plainly gives elsewhere ("Hær.," viii. 9)? Or can it be that a light had seemed to have come to him to illuminate the dim and puzzling records of the past, and that it had suddenly occurred to the worthy Bishop: Of course! Essæi is a mistake of Philo's for Jessæi, the followers of Jesus! Or was it finally that Epiphanius knew of an ancient tradition which declared that the Christians originally derived from the Essenes, that Jesus himself had been an Essene, and that the Church Father wished to safeguard the doctrinal tradition now stereotyped by the ecumenical decisions at Nicæa, by working into his treatise an argument against this "heretical" tradition, should it ever have the hardihood to raise its head again. This supposition may seem to some to cast a slur on the *bona fides* of our stalwart defender of orthodoxy; but Epiphanius is in all things a theologian and not a historian, and the canons of evidence for these two very different classes of mind are generally poles asunder. Moreover, we shall have to show that in several other instances Epiphanius has

The Mind of
Epiphanius.

for similar reasons dextrously woven into his expositions material of a very different pattern from that of the Catholic tradition, and even with regard to the name Issæi it may be that it hides an ancient trace of deep interest, as we shall see later on in another connection.

The Issæi of Nilus.

Apart from this, however, it is by no means improbable that the name Issæi was not original with Epiphanius, for Abbot Nilus, the renowned ascetic of Sinai, who had previously enjoyed a high reputation at Constantinople, and retired to one of the famous monasteries of the mysterious region of Sinai and Serbal in 390, and died in 430, speaks of the Issæi and says that they were the Jewish philosophers and ascetics who were originally followers of the Rechabite Jonadab.¹

Did, then, Nilus get this form of the name from Epiphanius, or did Epiphanius obtain it from the same source as Nilus? It is not improbable that among such monastic communities as those on Sinai and Serbal, and others with which Epiphanius had come into contact during his travels in Egypt, such a name-theory had been canvassed, may even have been a tradition necessitated in the first place by the same difficulties which Epiphanius had to face.

The "Therapeut=Christian" Controversy.

It must also be remembered that the Bishop of Constantia was not the first to claim the Essene-Therapeuts of Philo as the earliest Christians. Already, some fifty years previously, we find Eusebius in his "Church History" boldly declaring that these Therapeuts south of Alexandria were the first Christian Church in Egypt,

¹ "Tractatus de Monastica Exercitatione," c. iii. ; "S. P. N. Nili Abbatis Opera quæ supersunt," in Migne's "Patrologiæ Cursus Completus, Patrol. græc.," tom lxxix. (Paris ; 1860), vol. i. col. 722.

which Photius asserts later was founded by Mark. We have no space to trace the history of the fierce battle between Catholic and Protestant which has raged round this famous tract of Philo's because of this claim made by the Father of Church History, and the Philologus, or studious reader, as Epiphanius calls him, must be referred to Conybeare's magnificent and exhaustive work on the subject¹; I can only repeat what I have already written in my "Fragments" (pp. 64, 65), after reviewing the whole matter.

It is convincingly established against the "Pseudo-Philo" speculation of Grätz, Nicolas and Lucius, that the "De Vita Contemplativa" is a genuine Philonean tract. As to its date, we are confronted with some difficulties; but the expert opinion of Conybeare assures us that "every reperusal of the works of Philo confirms my feeling that the 'D. V. C.' is one of his earliest works" (*op. cit.*, p. 276). Now as Philo was born about the year 30 B.C., the date of the treatise may be roughly ascribed to the first quarter of the first century; Conybeare puts it conservatively "about the year 22 or 23" (*op. cit.*, p. 290).

The question, then, naturally arises: At such a date can the Therapeuts of Philo be identified with the earliest Christian Church at Alexandria? If the accepted dates of the origins are correct, the answer must be emphatically, No. If, on the contrary, the accepted dates are incorrect, and Philo's Therapeuts were "Christians," then we shall be compelled to change the values of many things.

The
Therapeut
Dilemma.

¹ Conybeare (F. C.), "Philo about the Contemplative Life, or the Fourth Book of the Treatise concerning the Virtues," critically edited, with a Defence of its Genuineness (Oxford; 1895).

But apart from the question of date, the contents of the "D. V. C." are of immense importance and interest as affording us a glimpse into those mysterious communities in which Christians for so many centuries recognized not only their forerunners, but themselves. The Therapeuts, however, were clearly not Christians in any sense in which the term has been used by dogmatic Christianity; Philo knows absolutely nothing of Christianity in any sense in which the word is used to-day. Who, then, were those Christian non-Christian Essene Therapeuts? The answer to this question demands, in our opinion, an entire reformulation of the accepted history of the origins.

The dilemma is one that cannot be avoided. It is chief of all problems which confront the student of Christian origins. The Therapeuts have been recognized throughout the centuries as identical with the earliest Christian Church of Egypt. They were known to Philo at the very latest as early as 25 A.D., and they must have existed long before. If the canonical dates are correct, they could not have been Christians, in the sense of being followers of Jesus; and yet they were so like the Christians, that the Church Fathers regarded them as the model of a Christian Church. We are, therefore, confronted with this dilemma; either Christianity existed before Christ, or the canonical dates are wrong. From this dilemma there seems to me to be no escape.

The Name-
Juggling of
Epiphanius.

Having, then, claimed the Essæans of Philo as early Christians, and having, as most assume, though perhaps erroneously, changed their name to Jessæans apparently to clinch the matter, Epiphanius finds himself

involved in a very great difficulty. What Philo tells us of the contemplative Essæans or Therapeuts is so similar to what the Christians conceived their earliest communities to have been, that the identification of the one with the other amounted for them to a certainty. On the other hand, Epiphanius knows from Philo and other sources that there were many things in which the Essæi differed from not only the Nicene Christianity of his day, but from any type of Christianity in canonical tradition. Moreover, the Essæans were still in existence, and had their own traditions, as we shall see later on, and Epiphanius knows something of the various "heresies" which still represented some of their teachings. The difficulty, therefore, which faced him was that these Essæans were not Christians in any Nicene sense.

Knowing, then, that Josephus, as we have seen, gives (perhaps erroneously) Esseni as a variant of Essæi, Epiphanius hit upon the idea that the Esseni were different from the Essæi, and as he had converted Essæi into the orthodox Issæi, so he changed Esseni into Osseni, and kept this form for all characteristics of the Essenes which he held to be pre-Christian or heretical. Even so Epiphanius cannot straighten out the matter, for in his Introduction ("Hær.," viii. 9) he tells us that the "Esseni" were the first heresy of the Samaritans, this being the only passage in which he uses the Josephic form of the name; he, however, says nothing further of these Esseni. It must, moreover, be confessed that our Cyprian Bishop is great on this device of name-change, for he has used it in other matters.

It therefore becomes of great interest to learn what The Osseni.

Epiphanius has to tell us of his Osseni. In his "Contra Ossenos" ("Hær.," xix. 1-5), he informs us that this heresy was interwoven with the heresies of the Nazaræi (not Nazōræi)—of whom more anon—of the Daily Baptists¹ and of the Pharisees, thus classifying them among pre-Christian sects. The Osseni, he tells us, were, like these other schools,² Jews; but, according to the tradition which had come to him, they did not originate in Judæa itself, but came from the regions to the east, south-east and south of the Dead Sea, mostly from Moab and Nabathæa; they were largely of Arabian origin. Are we, then, possibly to seek for the origin of the name Essene in old Arabic?

These Osseni, moreover, Epiphanius tells us, among other things used especially a certain scripture called the Book or Apocalypse of Elxai, which he elsewhere ("Hær.," liii. *et al.*) asserts to have been held in high esteem by the Ebionæans and Nazoræans, and especially by the Sampsæans, who, he says, are neither Christians, nor Jews, nor Greeks, but as they are midway between all of these, they are nothing. Here Epiphanius makes his Osseni heretical Christians or even still non-Christians. It, therefore, becomes of importance to learn what were the leading ideas of this Elxai scripture, but to this interesting subject we must devote a separate chapter.

The Nazoræi. We will next pass to what Epiphanius has to tell us of the Nazoræi ("Hær.," xxix. 1-9). After declaring that

¹ Called Masbotheans by Hegesippus (Mazbutha = Baptism). See Bousset, "Die Religion des Judentums," p. 437 n.

² The Pharisees, however, were not a school or a sect, but rather the national religious party among the Jews.

in the early days the Christians were all called Nazoræans, although for a short time they also bore the name Jessæans, Epiphanius enters into a very curious and deeply interesting digression on the Davidic descent of Jesus, which we shall treat in detail later on, and he then proceeds to tell us that Paul himself was accused of being a Nazoræan and acknowledged the title, confessing, moreover, that in the eyes of the Jews he was a heretic (Min); in all of which Epiphanius is, of course, only repeating the words of the writer of the Acts (xxiv. 5, 12-14).

According to Epiphanius, the Nazoræans were practically Jewish Christians, that is to say, Christians who still observed the Jewish Law; he is, however, not certain what their views were as to Jesus, whether they took the miraculous view of his birth and worshipped him as God, or regarded him as a simple man who became a prophet. It was against these Nazoræans, that is to say, the Christians who remained on the ground of Judaism, he tells us, that the Jews in their synagogues used to pronounce the curse to which reference has already been made, and which his contemporary Jerome assures us was directed against the Minæi (Minim).

These Nazoræans, even in Epiphanius' time, were numerous, and were scattered throughout Coele-Syria, Decapolis, Pella, the region beyond Jordan, and extended even as far east as Mesopotamia. And in this connection, he declares that the sect of the Nazoræans took its rise in and about Pella in Peræa after the fall of Jerusalem, for he will have it that the disciples, in reliance on a prophecy of Jesus, had fled thither to avoid the siege; this is, of course, the Eusebian account as well,

The Flight to
Pella.

but neither of these Fathers seem to have considered that it says little for the courage or patriotism of the disciples that they fled, nor does Epiphanius explain why, if the "heresy" of the Nazoræans began only subsequently to 70 A.D., Paul was called a Nazoræan a generation earlier.

Towards the
Facts of the
Case.

But indeed our heresiologist is ever involving himself in serious contradictions concerning these Nazoræi, for while on the one hand he makes them out to differ from the Catholic Christians only in their continued adherence to the Jewish Law, he elsewhere says that they in many things hold the same views as the Cerinthians, Ebionites, Sampsæans and Elkesæans, all of whom he most bitterly attacks because they did not acknowledge Jesus as God, but said that he was either simply a good man, or a man filled with the Holy Spirit of God, or that the Christ was the Great Power, or Great King; in brief they taught the natural birth of Jesus and the doctrine of the mystic Christ, and not the later historicized dogma finally made absolute by the Council of Nicæa.

The historical fact underlying all this contradiction seems to be simply that "Nazoræi" was a general name for many schools possessing many views differing from that view which subsequently became orthodox. Most of them still remained more or less on the ground of Judaism, but what is of the greatest importance is that they were the direct followers of those earliest Nazoræi of which, according to the tradition of the Acts, Paul was accused of being a leader.

That the tradition (or rather traditions, for they were many and various) of the Nazoræi differed very widely

from any form of Christianity known to canonical tradition, may be seen even in our own day from the complex scripture of their still existent descendants in the marches of Southern Babylonia, the so-called Mandaïtes, from whose Codex Nasaræus we have already quoted a few pregnant sentences; but the Genzā is a vast storehouse of mixed traditions of all kinds, to which, unfortunately, we have no space to refer in our present undertaking.

Epiphanius, as we have seen, is greatly put to it to extricate himself from the many difficulties which have puzzled many far wiser heads than his own. He feels compelled, on evidence which was doubtless far fuller in his day than it is in ours, to hold to the Nazoræans as the first Christians, and will have it that they used both the Old and New Testament (xxix. 7), though how the earliest Christians could have used the New Testament, when it was not yet in existence, he does not explain; they differed from the Catholic Christians only in so far that they observed the Jewish Law, the Sabbath and circumcision, the rite of the Covenant; but if so, it is strange that Epiphanius could be so careless as to say they used the New Testament, when so much of it is occupied with the Letters of Paul, who so strenuously withstood circumcision and the "letter (or Law) which killeth."

Nazoræan
Scriptures.

These Nazoræi, Epiphanius tells us, were exceedingly learned in Hebrew, and all their writings apparently were in Hebrew (or Aramaic). But when he leaves the vague ground of the "New Testament" and comes to documents, he can only name one Gospel which he claims to have been the Hebrew original of the Gospel

The Hebrew
Gospel.

according to Matthew, a book which was known to his contemporary Jerome, and a copy of which was in the Library founded by Pamphilus at Cæsarea.

It is impossible here to enter into the history of the puzzling controversy concerning this "Gospel of the Nazoræans," or to determine whether the Hebrew (or Aramaic) Gospel according to Matthew, which is referred to by Epiphanius and Jerome, and which the latter translated into Greek and Latin, but kept back because its striking divergences from canonical Matthew were not profitable to disclose, was different from the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," of which a Greek translation is known to have existed in the early years of the second century. Hilgenfeld holds that the Nazoræan Gospel (according to the Hebrews) was different from the Hebrew Gospel according to Matthew¹; while Lipsius, on the contrary, maintains that the two titles refer to one and the same document.²

Ancient
Readings.

The criticism of the question introduces us to a complicated problem of recensions, translations and retranslations, but in any case we are face to face with such readings as "Joseph begat Jesus," and the positive command, "Call me not 'Good,'" both of which infer a gospel-form which rejected the physical virgin-birth and the equation of Jesus with God. It is not, however, to be supposed that the literature of the Nazoræi, even on the ground of the New Covenant, was

¹ Hilgenfeld (A.), "Evangeliorum secundum Hebræos et cet. quæ supersunt; Librorum Deperditorum Fragmenta" (Leipzig; 1884, 2nd ed.), pp. 15 ff., 33 ff.

² See his article, "Gospels, Apocryphal" (The Gospel of the Hebrews) in Smith and Wace's "Dictionary of Christian Biography" (London; 1880).

confined to this Gospel and the "Book of Elxai"; on the contrary there must have been many books used by them, gospels and apocalypses of all kinds, both ancient and more recent.

Moreover, in following up the Nazoræi, Epiphanius gets involved in yet another chronological difficulty, which he attempts to solve in the same fashion as that in which he dealt with the Essene problem, namely, by a distinction in names. The Nazoræi about whom he has been telling us, are not, he says, to be confused with the Naziræi, a term meaning the "Sanctified" or "Consecrated" ("Hær.," xxix. 5); of whom Samson was one, and many after him, and among them John the Baptist.

The
Naziræi

There was, he says, a sect of the Nasaræi before Christ ("Hær.," xxix. 6); these he has already described ("Hær.," xviii. 1-3), calling them, however, Nazaræi. He treats of these in connection with the Daily Baptists, who, like the Essenes and allied communities, baptized or washed themselves in water every day; they were Jews, and lived in the same districts as the Essenes. They observed the law of circumcision, the Sabbath and the appointed feasts, and especially revered the ancient patriarchs and sages of Israel, including Moses; they however, rejected the canonical Pentateuch, and said that the real Law was different from the one in public circulation. They apparently also rejected all the prophets after Moses. Moreover, they refused to have anything to do with the blood sacrifices of the Temple and abstained from eating flesh. They contended that the books which laid down the rules of these sacrifices were inventions of later times, and that their true

ancestors from Adam to Moses did not perform such bloody rites; all the accounts of such sacrifice in the popular scripture were later inventions of scribes who were ignorant of the true doctrine. These Nazars, then, were an extreme school of those dissentient mystics whose sayings had from about 150 B.C. crept into the books which subsequently became canonical, such sayings as: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit"; "Sacrifices and offering Thou didst not desire."

This spiritual protest against the grossness of blood-offerings was also a characteristic of the Essenes; and there can be little doubt but that there must have been a very close connection between the ideals of these pre-Christian schools of mystic and humanitarian Judaism and the earliest Christians.

The Nazirs.

The bringing of the names *Nazoræi* and *Nazaræi* (and its variants) into such close connection, however, is puzzling. The Old Testament Nazirs were those "consecrated" to Yahweh by a vow, and their origin goes back to very early times in Jewish tradition. Now it is to be remarked that in Numbers vi. the word *nezer* is applied to the taking of the Nazirite vow of separation or consecration.¹ Knowing as we do how fond the Hebrews, and, for a matter of that, all the ancients, were of word-play, for philology proper was as yet undreamed of, and finding as we do that the name *netzer* ("branch") is given to one of the disciples of Jesus in the Talmud,² and in one of the Toldoth

¹ See Cheyne's (Robertson Smith's) article "Nazarite" in the "Enc. Bib."

² "Bab. Sanhedrin," 43a.

recensions to Jeschu himself, and that commentators are agreed that this is a play on *notzri*, the Hebrew for "Nazarene" (or Galilean, if our previous argument holds good); knowing further that some of the earliest followers of Jesus were Galileans, and that the Jews despised all Galileans in general as ignorant people, can it not be possible that some other of the earliest disciples of Jesus were Nazirs, in the later sense of the term, for the Talmud and Toldoth acknowledge that some of the disciples were learned men? It is, we admit, impossible at this late date to throw any certain light on this chaos of conflation of names, but it is not illegitimate to have asked the question.

It may of course be doubted whether there was an order of Nazarites contemporary with Jesus; nevertheless Epiphanius distinctly tells us that the mystics and ascetics of whom he is speaking, went back to pre-Christian times, and rejected the sacrificial and priestly views of the Ezra-Nehemiah redaction of the Torah. They are thus apparently to be associated with those who sought to revive the ancient "schools of the prophets," and who did revive them in a very remarkable fashion, as we know from the apocalyptic literature of the period. Such men would naturally have looked back to the Nazirs of old as an ideal, for "from allusions in Amos (ii. 11 ff.) we are led to suppose that at one time they (the Nazirs) had an importance—perhaps even an organization—parallel to that of the prophets."¹

The Neo-
Nazirs.

These Nazarites of Amos have also a parallel with the ancient Rechabites, a name which in later times

The
Rechabites.

¹ See Cheyne's article, *sup. cit.*

became synonymous with ascetic,¹ and the early writer Hegesippus tells us expressly (*ap.* Euseb., "H. E.," ii. 23), that "one of the priests of the Sons of Rechab, the son of Rechabim, who are mentioned by Jeremiah the prophet," protested against the murder of James the Just, the "brother of the Lord."

We have already also seen that Nilus asserts that the Issæi derived their descent from Jonadab the Rechabite, and though we have not space here to go into the matter as thoroughly as we could wish, we can at least see that all these scattered indications hang together, and point to the existence of numerous pre-Christian ascetic communities, who were closely interwoven with the origins of Christianity.

The
Sampsæans

Moreover, the great mythic hero of the Nazirs was Sampson (LXX.) or Samson, a name derived from SMS (*Heb.* Shemesh, *Chald.* Samas), or the Sun.² This at once brings us back to Epiphanius and his Sampsæans. We have already seen that the Bishop of Constantia, in speaking of the Naziræi ("Hær.," xxix. 5), knew that Samson was the great hero of these Nazirs, and yet he fails entirely to understand the significance of the hero's name. And this is strange, for after telling us ("Hær.," liii. 1-2) that the Sampsæans are to be found in the same regions as the Essenes and Nazoræans, and that they were also called Elkesæi, of whom we shall treat later on, he goes on to say that Sampsæi means Heliaci, that is to say Solares (Children or Worshipers

¹ See Bennett's article "Rechab, Rechabites" in Hastings' "Dict. of the Bible."

² See Budde's article "Samson" in Hastings' "Dict. of the Bible."

of the Sun). The Osseni, Ebionæi and Nazoræi, he repeats, all use the "Book of Elxai," and especially the Sampsæans, or as we should prefer to take it, one of the books they all used was this apocalypse.

They were sun-worshippers; not, however, in the gross sense in which Epiphanius would have us understand the term, but presumably in the same sense as the Therapeuts were sun-worshippers, who, as Philo tells us, "twice a day, at dawn and even, are accustomed to offer up prayers; as the sun rises praying for the sunshine, the real sunshine, that their minds may be filled with heavenly light, and as it sets praying that their soul, completely lightened of the lust of the senses and sensations, may withdraw to its own congregation and council-chamber, there to track out truth."¹

Their teacher was not, as Epiphanius would have it, a man called Elxaios, but some Great Power, as we shall see later on, and those who were illumined were said to be "kin to Him" and born of the "blessed seed." This reminds us forcibly of the Mind or Shepherd of Men in the Trismegistic treatises, and of much else. This "Mind of all-mastership," was the Father of the children or disciples in whom the Logos had come to birth; in other words, who had become "Christs." And Epiphanius tells us that the Sampsæans and the rest would gladly lay down their lives for any of this "race of Elxai"; moreover, those of this race were believed to have the power of miraculous healing.

Epiphanius further informs us that the Sampsæans would not receive the prophets and apostles (presumably of Petrine and Pauline Christianity), and that they

Sun-worshippers.

Their Mystic Doctrine.

¹ Phil., "D. V. C.," P. 893, M. 475.

used the term *Christus* with a signification at variance with that of the later Nicene belief. Epiphanius cannot understand the symbolism of these Children of the Sun, and makes a great hash of it ; but it seems to have been simple enough. The positive and negative aspects of the Divine Logos were symbolized by the Sun (or Fire) and Water, the Light and Life. The Christ and his sister, or spouse, the Holy Spirit or the Sophia (Wisdom), were the dual Son of God, the true Man. Those who had reached the consciousness of their at-onement with this sexless Man, were Christs or Anointed. The true spiritual body of the Christ they termed the "Body of Adam," the garment which was left behind in Paradise, when the soul descended, and which it will put on again when it returns triumphant as the Victor ; of all of which in this and every other connection Epiphanius appears not to have had the least notion, for he can only ridicule or denounce it.

The
Ebionites.

We next pass on to the Ebionæans or Ebionites, whom we find in Epiphanius inextricably interwoven with the Nazoræans and allied sects. The Bishop of Constantia apostrophizes with great vigour a certain Ebion, whom he imagines, as did his predecessors in heresiology, to have been the founder of this widespread heresy. He proceeds to confute this "serpent" at great length by the very simple process of quoting from the canonical books of the New Testament, which of course the good Father held to constitute an infallible historical record, against which there was no appeal. Epiphanius, like his patristic predecessors, has, of course, not the slightest appreciation of the position of these early "heretics," and begs the whole question with that superb confidence

which has ever characterized the defenders of Catholicism. The position of the followers of these early schools, however, was precisely that they depended upon a tradition which they claimed to be earlier than that of the canonical view; it was an appeal to history, and history has so far never answered the appeal, history's voice has been drowned by the passionate rhetoric of the theologians.

The name Ebionæi (*Heb.* Ebionim) meant simply The "Poor," "Poor," and did not derive from an imaginary eponymous Ebion, as has been now for many years admitted by scholars of every school. Ebion is a myth begotten of the rhetoric of patristic polemics. So much is certain; but who the "Poor" originally were, and why they were so called, is one of the innumerable conundrums with which the sphinx of the Christian origins confronts the critical Œdipus.

Already we find Paul in his Letter to the Galatians (ii. 10) referring to the "poor" in such a way that Hilgenfeld takes the term as a general designation of the early Christian communities and not simply the poor of the church of the "pillars" at Jerusalem.¹ We also find the writer of the third Gospel using among his "sources" a form of the Sayings which are held to be of a distinctly "Ebionite" character, that is to say, containing such unqualified declarations as "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke vi. 20), a dark saying, not only for us, but also for the writer of the first Gospel, or his Logia "source," which gives it as "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matt. v. 3), where τῶ πνεύματι has all the appearance

The "Poor."

The Riddle of the Name.

¹ Hilgenfeld, "Ketzergeschichte," p. 422.

of being a gloss, unless we accept Jerome's interpretation (*in loc.*), "those who on account of the Holy Spirit are voluntarily poor"; in which case it might be regarded as the original form of the Saying, and hence as addressed to the members of an already formed community; for the usual interpretation of the Catholic Fathers, that the phrase is a periphrasis for "humble," would be a brusque departure from the simple wording of the rest of the Sayings of the same category.

But even so, if the more elaborate form is the original, it is difficult to explain why the writer of the third Gospel should have dropped the qualifying $\tau\hat{\omega}$ $\piνεύματι$, a phrase by no means easy of translation, unless it be the literal rendering of some Hebrew or Aramaic idiom.

If, on the contrary, the simple "poor" is the original form, the idea of a community of Poor cannot be entertained, and we must rather attribute it to some dark saying of the Master preserved by those who falsely imagined that He was preaching some social revolution of poor against rich, for a Master of Wisdom could certainly not have preached that the mere fact of poverty was a virtue, and the mere fact of riches a condemnation.

In our present lack of reliable data it is, then, useless to speculate as to the *origin* of the name Ebionite; this much we know, that later on those who were so called were not necessarily poor, though some of them were voluntarily Poor; "naked they sought the Naked," as the Gymnosophist of Upper Egypt is reported to have told Apollonius in the first century.¹

The point, however, which has proved of greatest

The Twofold
Ebionism
Hypothesis.

¹ See my "Apollonius of Tyana, the Philosopher-Reformer of the First Century" (London; 1902), p. 100.

difficulty in all research into this puzzling question of the Ebionæans, is that while Irenæus, about 180 A.D., knows only of one kind of Ebionites ("Ref.," i. 22), those who assert that Jesus was born a man as all men, and who reject Paul; on the contrary Origen ("C. Cels.," v. 61.), towards the middle of the third century, speaks of two kinds of Ebionites, both those who say that Jesus was a man, and those who believe in the virgin-birth, as also does Eusebius at the beginning of the fourth century ("H. E.," iii. 27). Accordingly innumerable hypotheses have been put forward, and attempts made to divide and subdivide the Ebionites, ever since the "Tübingen school" maintained that in them we had the remnants of original Apostolic Christianity; there is, however, no agreement among the authorities.

Perhaps of all the distinctions drawn between the Ebionites, the attempt to separate them by a supposed chronological canon, and to speak of "Ebionism proper" and "Gnostic Ebionism,"¹ is the most misleading, for, as is invariably the case, the comparative lateness of "Gnosticism" is assumed as a firmly-established fact for all questions of Church History. But the fond presumption of the later Church Fathers that the Church remained a "pure virgin" uncontaminated by "heresy" until the reign of Trajan, is no longer to be maintained in face of the testimony of Paul, our earliest witness to the existence of the Faith.

As I have already stated elsewhere,² Gnosticism is

The Early
Date of
Gnosticism,

¹ See Fuller's article "Ebionism" in S. and W.'s "Dict. of, Christ. Biog."

² See "Some Notes on the Gnostics" in "The Nineteenth Century" (Nov. 1902), pp. 822-835.

not to be confined to the second and part of the third century ; it was flourishing in the first century as well : indeed, Christianity seems to have been in contact with communities of a Gnostic character from its very beginnings. Setting aside the hotly-debated point whether Jesus himself was a member of one of the Essene communities, there is very little doubt that Paul, whose authentic Letters are the earliest historic records of Christendom, was in some sort of contact with "Gnostic" ideas. It is generally believed that the Apostle to the Gentiles was in irreconcilable conflict with every sort of Gnosticism, because of his phrase, "Gnosis falsely so called"; but if so, it is an extraordinary fact that some of his Letters are filled with technical terms of the Gnosis, terms which receive ample, elaborate, and repeated explanation in Gnostic tradition, but which remain as every-day words deprived of all technical context in Catholic hands.

Paul and the
Gnosis.

To take one instance out of many—one, however, which, to the writer's knowledge, has not been noticed before. The Authorized Version renders I. Corinthians xv. 8 in the famous and familiar words: "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." What is the meaning of the graphic but puzzling "born out of due time," which so many accept because of its familiar sound without further question?

"And last of all, ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ ἐκτρώματι, he appeared to me also." "And last of all, as to the ἔκτρωμα, he appeared to me also." "And last of all as to 'the abortion,' he appeared to me also." Notice

the article, "as to *the* abortion," not "as to *an* abortion."¹

Now "the abortion" is a technical and oft-repeated term of one of the great systems of the Gnosis, a term which enters into the main fabric of the Sophia-mythus.

In the mystic cosmogony of these Gnostic circles, The
"Abortion." "the abortion" was the crude matter cast out of the Plerōma or world of perfection. This crude and chaotic matter was in the cosmogonical process shaped into a perfect "æon" by the World-Christ; that is to say, was made into a world-system by the ordering or cosmic power of the Logos. "The abortion" was the unshaped and unordered chaotic matter which had to be separated out, ordered and perfected, in the macrocosmic task of the "enformation according to substance," while this again was to be completed on the soteriological side by the microcosmic process of the "enformation according to gnosis" or spiritual consciousness. As the world-soul was perfected by the World-Christ, so was the individual soul to be perfected and redeemed by the individual Christ.

Paul thus becomes comprehensible; he here speaks the language of the Gnosis, and in this instance at least it is possible to draw the deduction that the Gnosis in this connection could not, in his opinion, have been "falsely so called." Paul is speaking to communities who are familiar with such language "He appeared to me just as it were to that well-known imperfect plasm

¹The reading has never been questioned; but even if it were questioned, the canon that "the more difficult reading is to be preferred to the easier" would decide for the retention of the article.

which we call 'the abortion,'” he says; “I use a figure familiar to all of you.”

The Puzzle of
the Pauline
Communities.

If, then, we accept the main Pauline Letters as genuine, the problem we have to face is this, that we are in them presented with a picture of communities which had plainly existed before Paul's propaganda, not only in Palestine but also among the Diaspora, and that at least some of these communities were familiar with Gnostic nomenclature. Paul uses language which convinces us that the communities which devoted themselves to the cultivation of “the gifts of the spirit” were not originally founded by himself, but that they had been long established, for he does not speak of these things as new, but as very familiar, not as taught by himself, but rather as to be modified by his own more common-sense teaching. These communities were not only familiar with Gnostic nomenclature, but also with some sort of undisciplined “prophesying”; whence did they have such things? It is not sufficient impatiently to set these facts on one side, for it is just such facts which are the fundamental *data* in any attempt to solve the mystery of Christian origins.

It is, therefore, somewhat beside the point to assume that “Gnostic Ebionism” must have necessarily been later than “Ebionism proper,” especially as it is just this “Ebionism proper” about which we should like to inform ourselves.

Ebionite
Christology.

The main charge against the Ebionites, as Hippolytus tells us (“Philos.,” vii. 34), is that they, like all the earliest “heretics,” denied the later doctrine of the miraculous physical virgin-birth of Jesus. They lived according to the Jewish customs, claiming that they were justified

"according to the Law." They further declared, so says Hippolytus, that Jesus had been so justified by his practice of the Law; it was for this cause that they called him "the anointed (Christ) of God and Jesus;¹ for none of the other (? prophets) had fulfilled the Law." They further declared "that they themselves could by doing the same become Christs; for, they said, that he (Jesus) was a man like all men."

We know also that other of the early schools went still further and claimed that members of their communities had already reached this high stage of justification and illumination, as high as Paul or even Jesus himself, and that this could even be transcended—a vain and empty boast, you will say, but then we have no record of their lives, but only the bitter denunciations of the Church Fathers.

Apparently the earliest form of mystic Ebionite Christology was that of "election." Thus we find Justin Martyr (*c.* 145–150 A.D.), in his "Dialogue with Trypho" (xlix.), putting the following argument into the mouth of his Jewish opponent: "Those who affirm him to have been a man, and to have been anointed by election, and then to have become a Christ (Anointed), appear to me to speak more plausibly than you," that is Justin, who maintains the physical virgin birth dogma, and who in the previous chapter had said to Trypho: "Even if I cannot demonstrate so much as this [namely, that Jesus was God incarnate in the Virgin's womb], you will at least admit that Jesus is the

The Doctrine
of Election.

¹ Why they called him "Jesus," Hippolytus unfortunately does not tell us; but we may perhaps get on the track of the reason in the next chapter.

Messiah (Anointed) of God, in case he can be shown to have been born as a man of men, and be proved to have been raised by election to the dignity of messiahship. For there are . . . some of our persuasion (lit. race) who admit that he is the Messiah, but declare him to have been a man of men."

The
"Shepherd
of Hermas"
on Election.

In the "Shepherd of Hermas," which in the part from which we quote ("Sim." v. 5) is distinctly older than Justin, this doctrine of election or adoption is set forth as follows:

"God made His Holy Spirit, which pre-existed and created all creation, to enter and dwell in the flesh (*i.e.*, human body) which He approved. This flesh, therefore, in which the Holy Spirit took up its dwelling, served the Spirit well in holiness and purity, having never in any way polluted the Spirit. Therefore, because it had lived well and purely, and had laboured with the Spirit and worked therewith in every matter, conversing bravely and manfully, God chose it to be participator along with the Holy Spirit. For the flesh walked as pleased God, because it was not polluted upon earth, having the Holy Spirit. God, therefore, took into counsel the Son and the angels in their glory, to the end that this flesh, having blamelessly served the Spirit, might furnish, as it were, a place of tabernacling (for the Spirit), and might not seem to have lost the reward of its service. For all flesh shall receive the reward which shall be found without stain or spot, and in it the Holy Spirit shall make its home."¹

The Heresy of
all Heresies.

This election was said to be consummated at

¹ Conybeare's translation, *op. sub. cit.*, pp. lxxxix., xc.

"baptism," nay, it was the true Baptism of the Holy Spirit. As we shall see in the next chapter, the Holy Spirit or Wisdom was the spouse of the Son or Great King. When this universal mystic teaching became historicized and connected with an actual physical baptism by John the Baptist it is impossible to say, but it is very certain that the "heresy" of "election," and the claim of the early mystics that all men who lived the life of true holiness could become Christs, was the unforgiveable sin of the subsequently orthodox Fathers, and that this teaching has been relentlessly crushed out by the Catholic Church wherever found throughout the centuries.¹

But indeed the question of Ebionism is of a so vast and complicated nature that it would require a whole volume in itself to exhaust the contradictory indications of the Church Fathers and analyse the "Clementine" Literature. There seems to have been every shade of "Ebionism," and if on the one hand the Church Fathers tell us that the Ebionæans accepted the whole of the Old Testament, on the other we are informed that they submitted its documents to a most drastic criticism, some of them rejecting not only all the Prophets, but even much of the Pentateuch. Like so many of the Gnostics they had a subjective canon whereby they sorted out the inspiration of the Old Testament as pure, mixed and evil.

This much only is certain, that we are no longer able to assign a precise meaning to the terribly abused

Necessity for
a New Defini-
tion of
Ebionism.

¹ See Conybeare (F. C.) "The Key of Truth, a Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia" (Oxford; 1898); index, *s.vv.* "Election" and "Elect," *e.g.*, "Elect regarded as Christs," etc.

term "Ebionism"; it is as vague as, nay vaguer than, "Gnosticism," for in the latter at any rate there must be a mystic element, whereas with "Ebionism proper" it is mostly confounded with materialistic and limited views, though, as we have seen, erroneously.

The
Samaritans.

We have already seen that these mystic and more liberal ideas flourished especially in districts where the people were of non-Jewish extraction; we are, therefore, not surprised to find that Samaria also, whose inhabitants were almost purely of non-Jewish descent, was a hot-bed of "heresies" of all kinds. For the Jew, then, "Samaritan" stood for a heretic *par excellence*, and we are therefore not astonished to find that one of the epithets applied by the Rabbis to Jesus was that of Samaritan.

Samaritan
Sects.

In this connection it is of interest to note that Epiphanius ("Hær.," ix.) tells us that the four principal sects of the Samaritans were (i) the Esseni, (ii) the Gortheni, (iii) the Sebuæans, and (iv) the Dositheans.

It is very strange to find the Essenes heading the list, for no other writer calls the members of this interesting brotherhood Samaritans. It may be that the Bishop of Constantia does so, because he found that schools closely allied to them rejected all other of the Jewish scriptures except the Pentateuch. It may, however, be that as a matter of history the Essenes themselves also rejected much which subsequently became the orthodoxy of Mishnaic Rabbinism, and they may very well have had many adherents in Samaria.

As to the Gortheni, who are also mentioned by Hegesippus (*ap.* Euseb., "H. E.," iv. 22), who flourished in the latter half of the second century, Epiphanius calls

them also Gortheōni ("Ancorat," 12) and also Gorotheōni ("Hær.," i. 12), but tells us nothing about them. Theodoret, however, says ("Hær. Fab.," i. 1) that they derived their doctrines from Simon Magus, that is to say, they held the same views as did the mystics associated later on with this semi-mythical "founder" of Christian heresy, according to the Church Fathers.

As to the Sebuxæans, Epiphanius alone mentions them, but tells us nothing about them except that they held certain Feasts on days which differed widely from the dates of the Jews.

With the mention of the Dositheans, however, we come to a subject of greater interest. And here we will leave Epiphanius and follow the *data* collected in the excellent article of Salmon.¹ The "Ebionite" Clementine "Recognitions" tell us that Simon Magus was a disciple of Dositheus (that is, perhaps, of the school of Dositheus), and that Dositheus (*Heb.* Dosthai) was the prophet like unto Moses whom Yahweh was to raise up. The Clementine "Homilies," on the contrary, in true legendary style declare that both Dositheus and Simon were co-disciples of John the Baptist. As Jesus, the Sun, had twelve disciples, so John, the Moon, had thirty disciples, the number of days in a lunation, or more accurately $29\frac{1}{2}$, for one of them was a woman. Simon, it is said, studied magic in Egypt, and there is a strange legend of a contest between him and Dositheus, in which Simon proves himself the victor.

The
Dositheans.

The Recognitions also state that Dositheus was the founder of the sect of the Sadducees, which means probably nothing more historically than that Dositheus, as

The Importance of
Dositheus.

¹ "Dositheus," in Smith and Wace's "Dict. of Christ. Biography."

was to be expected of a Samaritan, rejected all the subsequently canonical books, and held to the Pentateuch alone. In any case this statement assures us that Dositheus was considered in subsequent times a man of very great importance. And as this statement was also made by Hippolytus in his lost Compendium, the view must have been very widespread. In any case Hippolytus I. gave the foremost place among his pre-Christian sects to Dositheus.

Origen (in Johann. iv.) speaks of books ascribed to Dositheus as being still current among the followers of that then ancient tradition, and of a popular belief among them that their master had not really died.

Some Curious
Legends.

Epiphanius describes the Dositheans as observers of the Law; they, however, abstained from animal food, and many of them from sexual intercourse. Epiphanius further adds a story that Dositheus finally retired to a cave and there practised such severe asceticism as to bring his life to a voluntary end. An exceedingly interesting variant of this story appears in a Samaritan Chronicle, where it is said that the Samaritan high-priest took such severe measures against the new sect, because of its use of a Book of the Law which was said to have been falsified by Dousis (Dositheus), that Dousis was compelled to "fly" to a mountain and hide himself in a cave, where he died from want of food. There is a striking similarity between this and the conclusion of the Shemtob form of Toldoth which we have quoted in the chapter on "Traces of Early Toldoth Forms," where Jesus flies away to a cave on Mount Carmel.

Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria, who died 608 A.D.

and who appears to have studied Dosithean books, says that Dosthes (Dositheus) exhibited particular hostility to the Patriarch Judah. That is to say, presumably, that the Dositheans particularly detested a certain Judah. Can this have anything to do with the Judas of the Toldoth, and did the Dositheans give the other side?

Finally, it is very curious to find that Aboulfatah, an Arab historian, who flourished in the fourteenth century, and who was personally acquainted with the adherents of this long-lived Dosithean tradition, places Dositheus 100 years B.C. Dositheus, he tells us, was said to have claimed to have been the Prophet, foretold by Moses, and also the Star, prophetically announced in Numbers.¹ Dositheus, says Aboulfatah, that is to say, according to the tradition of the Dositheans of his day, lived in the days of John Hyrcanus, who died 105 B.C.²

Dositheus and
the 100 years
B.C. Date.

This Dosithean tradition, therefore, appears to me to be deserving of greater attention than has yet been bestowed upon it; it is not satisfactory to dismiss it impatiently with the epithet "*fabulosa*," as does Juynboll, and those who copy from him. The Simon Magus tradition is interwoven with the Dosithean; the Church Fathers assert with one voice that all the heresies of Christianity sprang from Simon Magus; the Simon Magus legends are interwoven with the Toldoth legends of Jesus. Baur startled traditionalists with the theory

The Con-
flation of
Traditions.

¹ Num. xxiv. 17: "There shall come a star out of Jacob."

² See Juynboll (T. G. J.), "Chronicon Samaritanum, arabice conscriptum cui Titulus est Liber Josuæ" (Leyden; 1848), pp. 112, 114.

that the name Simon Magus was simply a disguise for Paul, but the Jewish tradition amazes us still further with the suggestion that Simon Magus in some fantastic fashion is a legend-glyph, if not for Jesus, at any rate for those who followed the earliest tradition of the historical Jesus.

We will next turn our attention to some considerations "Concerning the Book of Elxai."

XVIII.—CONCERNING THE BOOK OF ELXAI.

As we have already seen that, according to Epiphanius, the Essenes, Nazorenes, Ebionites, and Sampsæans thought very highly of a certain ancient document called the "Book of Elxai," it will be of interest to enquire further into the matter.

The
"Shepherd
of Hermas."

Hilgenfeld has argued¹ that already the apocalyptic scribe of that Early Church document the "Shepherd of Hermas," or as he prefers the redactor of the Apocalyptic Hermas (as distinguished from the Pastoral Hermas) was acquainted with this "Book of Elxai." Whether or not this early writer was acquainted with the actual book the later Church Fathers had in mind is a matter still *sub judice*; but he certainly was acquainted with some portion of the enormous cycle of apocalyptic literature and the general circle of ideas with which all the early mystic schools were more or less in touch.

The apocalyptic part of the "Shepherd" is practically one of the innumerable permutations and combinations of the Sophia-mythus. It is one of the many settings forth of the mystic lore and love of the Christ and the Sophia, or Wisdom, of the Son of God and His spouse

¹ Hilgenfeld (A.), "Hermæ Pastor" (Leipzig; 1881, 2nd ed.), Introd., pp. xxix., xxx.

or sister, the Holy Spirit, of the King and Queen, of the Lord and the Church. In this most instructive series of visions are depicted the mystic scenes of the allegorical drama of man's inner nature—the mystery-play of all time. Most beautifully and most simply is the story told in this ancient monument of early Christendom, and it is much to be regretted that the "Shepherd" has not been included in the Canon; but perhaps it was too general, too universal for the historicizers.

It is also of very great interest to notice the many intimate points of contact between the contents of the Apocalyptic Hermas and the teaching of the early "Shepherd of Men" tractates of the mystic school who looked to Hermes the Thrice-greatest as their inspirer, that is to say, the earliest deposit of Trismegistic literature. But that is another story which has not yet been told.

Hermas a
Composite
Document.

Like all the other extant extra-canonical documents of the Early Church, the "Shepherd of Hermas" has been submitted to the most searching analysis by modern criticism, and though its unity is still strenuously defended by some scholars, we are inclined to agree with Hilgenfeld, who detects in the present form of the Hermas document three elements, or three deposits so to say; (i) the Apocalyptic (Vis. i.—iv.); (ii) the Pastoral (Vis. v.—Sim. vii.); (iii) the Secondary, or appendix of the latest redactor (Sim. viii.—x.). Hermas i. and ii. cite nothing from any of the books of the canonical New Testament.¹

It is Hermas i., moreover, which is acquainted with

¹ Hilgenfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. xxx., xxxi.

the most distinctive features of the cycle of ideas of which we find traces in the few fragments of the "Book of Elxai" which can be recovered from the polemical writings of the Fathers. This Apocalyptic Hermas is distinctly Anti-Pauline, and therefore cannot be expected to quote from the Letters of Paul, but what is remarkable is that neither it nor the Pastoral Hermas quote from any of our four canonical gospels.

If, then, we are inclined to accept the statement of the writer of the Muratorian Fragment (*c.* 170 A.D.), that Hermas was written at Rome during the bishopric of Pius (140—*c.* 155 A.D.), this must be taken to refer to the last redactor who is held to be responsible for Hermas iii., and who seems to be acquainted with several books of the Canon, and the Apocalyptic Hermas may be pushed back to at least the beginning of the second century. We have also to remember not only that the Greek original even of our form of Hermas is lost, but that the Old Latin version has also disappeared, and that we possess only a Greek re-translation of the Latin,¹ and therefore the original Hermas may have contained more abundant traces of some things of which it would be of great service to independent students of the origins to have a more exact knowledge, but which have disappeared in translation and retranslation.

In any case the original form of the "Book of Elxai" is thus seen to be of an early date, and the general ideas in it are presumably still earlier. A just ap-

¹ See De Gebhardt (O.) and Harnack (A.), "Hermæ Pastor," in "Patrum Apostolicorum Opera," fascic. iii. (Leipzig; 1877), Prolegg. xi. n. 2.

preciation of the nature of its contents, therefore, is of very great importance to the historian of Early Christianity; and as Hilgenfeld, in the appendix¹ to his admirable edition of the "Shepherd," has conveniently brought together every passage from the Fathers relating to this curious document of Christian antiquity, we will bring the evidence into court and discuss it.

The Church Fathers and the "Book of Elxai."

In the first place we must remember that our scanty information is derived entirely from those who have not a single good word to say for the book or for the followers of its teaching. We have painfully to extract what facts we can from the hurly-burly of indiscriminate denunciation, from a few sentences here or there torn out of the context for polemical purposes, only such things being quoted as appeared to the heresiologists ridiculous, extravagant or detestable.

Hippolytus, Bishop of Portus, writing at Rome about 222 A.D., is bitterly incensed at the book, a copy of which, he says, had been brought to the City by a certain Alcibiades, a native of Apameia in Syria²; but whether or not Hippolytus always quotes from the book itself or from the teachings of Alcibiades, who made use of the authority of what he considered to be a very ancient document in support of a more lenient view of the forgiveness of sins, a question which was then strongly agitating the Church of Rome, and on which Hippolytus himself held a far stricter view, is by no means clear.

¹ "Elxai Fragmenta Collecta, Digesta, Dijudicata."

² The original "Book of Elxai" was presumably in Hebrew, and was subsequently translated into Greek.

Basing themselves apparently on Hippolytus, all scholars¹ confidently assert that according to the book itself, it was written in the third year of Trajan, that is 101 A.D.; whereas, as a matter of fact, Hippolytus does not say so. It is true that Hippolytus states ("Philos.," ix. 13) that Alcibiades declared that the gospel of a new remission of sins was preached in the third year of Trajan; but did Alcibiades make such an assertion himself, or did Hippolytus deduce this from a passage which he elsewhere professes to quote from the book itself?

The Date of
the Book.

What the full text of this passage may have been originally we can by no means be certain, since in the only surviving copy of Hippolytus' "Refutation" some words are utterly corrupt. It must be remembered that we have only the single copy of the text of the "Philosophumena," or "Refutatio Omnium Hæresium" of Hippolytus, which was discovered in one of the monasteries on Mount Athos, and brought to Paris by Minoides Mynas in 1842.

This passage from the "Book of Elxai" is a reference to a famous prophecy of the time, and runs as follows: "When three years of Trajan Cæsar are fulfilled, from the time when he subdued . . . the Parthians (when three years have been fulfilled),² the war between the angels of unrighteousness of the North is stirred up,³

The "Three
Years of
Trajan."

¹ So also even Hilgenfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

² Probably a gloss.

³ ἀγγίζονται, a very rare word, not found at all in Liddell and Scott, while in Sophocles' Lexicon (New York; 1887) the only references are to our passage and to Symm. Prov. xv. 18. Sophocles gives the meaning as "to irritate, excite," while Duncker and Schneidewin translate "*exardescit*."

owing to which all kingdoms of unrighteousness are thrown into confusion " ("Philos.," ix. 16).¹

Whatever may be the exact meaning of the passage, it seems not illegitimate to conclude that the "third year of Trajan" date originated in this "prophecy," which, for all we know, may have belonged to the general Elxai circle of ideas, or literature (for this was certainly not confined to one document), and originally formed no part of the Book, though it may have subsequently been appended to the original apocalyptic document, for it apparently came at the end of the copy known to Hippolytus, and not at the beginning, as some have carelessly supposed.

The Book
Older than
the Prophecy.

In this connection it is of interest to recall to mind that Trajan began the Parthian campaign in 114 A.D., and that three years afterwards the fierce and bloody revolt of the Jews of Cyrene and Egypt, in which no less than a million Hebrews are said to have perished, was suppressed. In 117 Trajan died, and in 118 Hadrian set out for Mæsia (the modern Bulgaria), one of the most northern provinces of the Empire, to fight against the Sarmatians. If this is the fact alluded to, then we have a date of a similar nature to so many in the prophetic and apocalyptic literature of the times and of earlier years, and we may place the *terminus a quo* of this particular element of the Elxai literature at 118 A.D. But are the mystic visions and christology of our

¹ I use the latest text and critical notes of Duncker (L.) and Schneidewin (F. G.), "S. Hippol. . . . Refutationis Omnium Hæresium quæ supersunt" (Göttingen; 1859), and regard the emendation given by Hilgenfeld, in his "Ketzer-geschichte des Urchristenthums" (Leipzig; 1884), p. 435 n. 757, as too arbitrary.

book to be so dated? For our part we consider them to be far earlier.

On the other hand, supposing that the date of the third year of Trajan (101 A.D.) is taken as Hippolytus gives it, then, seeing that this "prophecy" did not come true—(unless the fact that the first Dacian War broke out in the third year of Trajan, Dacia being the most northern province on the other side of the Danube, be held vaguely to explain the "prophecy")—as Hilgenfeldt acutely remarks, the Book must have been written prior to this date, for who fabricates a prophecy which he knows already to be false?¹

But even so I do not think that it can be asserted categorically that the "Book of Elxai" itself was written in 101 A.D. It may very well be that the fierce suppression of the frantic effort to regain their independence made by the Jews of Cyrene and Egypt, where apocalyptic ideas were specially rife, may have been a psychological moment when the mystic teaching of repentance could be preached with the greatest effect, even as had been the case some fifty years before when Jerusalem fell; it may very well have been that the Essene-Nazarene-Sampsæan circles used this opportunity of making known the saving mysteries of their traditions for the benefit of their disheartened countrymen; but these mysteries were not newly invented.

Who, then, was Elxai? What does the name mean? Who was
Elxai?
The name is evidently Semitic; Hebrew, Aramaic, or Old Arabic, it matters not. Hippolytus gives it as Elchasai, Origen as Helkesai, Epiphanius as Elxaï or Elkessai. Epiphanius further informs us ("Hær.," xix.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. xxx.

2) that the name meant the "Hidden Power." Some scholars accept this,¹ others reject it,² though no sufficient reason for this rejection is given. In my opinion, this scrap of information dropped by Epiphanius—the significance of which he was totally unable to appreciate, and which he only reproduces to serve as the occasion of a sneer, as in so many other cases—puts us on the right track out of this labyrinth of misunderstanding. Elxai was the name of no man, even as Ebion, the founder of Ebionism as imagined by the hæresiologists, was no man, and just as Colarbasus and Epiphanes were imagined heretics, and even to some extent Simon Magus.

Elxai-Sophia. As to the mythic Colarbasus, in Hebrew Chol-arba means literally the "All-four," that is, the sacred Tetrad or Tetractys, which in the system of Marcus, for instance, is figured as the Feminine Power, the Greatness, who in the form of a woman, the Divine Sophia, was the revealer of the mysteries as set forth in the apocalyptic scripture in which Mark expounded the general ideas of his tradition; for, as he says, the world could not bear the power or effulgence of the Masculine Greatness or Potency, the Christ.³ Epiphanes in like manner can be equated with the "Newly Appearing One," the "waxing moon," the Moon being also a glyph of the Sophia.⁴ Simon and Helen again are the Sun and Moon, the Christ and the Sophia; but of this later on.

¹ See Salmon's article "Elkesai" in Smith and Wace's "Dictionary of Christian Biography" (London; 1880).

² See Hilgenfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

³ See "The Number-System of Marcus" in my "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten" (London; 1900), pp. 358-382.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 234.

I, therefore, conclude with no rash confidence, that Elxai, the Hidden Power, was in reality one of the many names of the Sophia or Wisdom, the Holy Ghost, the mystic sister or spouse (the Shakti as Brāhmanical mysticism calls it) of the Masculine One, the Christ. And this is borne out by the main apocalyptic fragment of the Book which has survived among the few quotations made by Hippolytus and Epiphanius, and which is in the form of a vision of the Christ and Sophia as of two immense beings, reaching from earth to highest heaven, of which the mystic dimensions are given, just as in the diagram of the Heavenly Man, as portrayed in the apocalypse of Marcus.

But we have not yet done with the matter, for Epiphanius tells us that Elxai, who, as we have seen, he takes for a man, and a dangerous and blasphemous heretic to boot, had a brother called Iexaios ("Hær.," xix. 1), and in another place ("Hær.," liii. 1), he further informs us that the Sampsæans said they possessed another book, which they regarded with very great reverence, namely, the "Book of Iexai," the brother of Elxai. Remembering, then, that the Marcosians declared that the world was not able to bear the effulgence of the "Masculine Greatness," it is legitimate to speculate that this "Book of Iexai" was purposely kept back from general circulation; it was a true apocryphon. It was presumably a book containing the higher mysteries or more recondite mystic teachings of this tradition; it may even have been the book which contained what was thought to be the real name and teaching of the one called Jesus among men, which name, as Marcus declares, was held to be a substitute for a far more ancient and sacred title.

Iexai-
Christos.

Jexai-Jesus. In brief Iexai was the Christ, the King, the spouse of Elxai, the Hidden Power, or Holy Ghost, or Sophia ; He was perhaps the concealed Divine Triad of the Holy Four of Marcus, the "Triple Man" of other systems. In this connection it is interesting to notice that Iexai is explained by some scholars as meaning in Hebrew the "Hidden Lord." Can it then be possible that there is some connection between the name Iexai (or Jessai) and the Iessaïans or Jessæans to whom Epiphanius refers, as Hilgenfeld supposes ? And if so, what conflation or syncretism is there between the general term Iexai or Jexai (Hidden Lord) and the Jesus of history ? For "Jesus," says Marcus, is only the sound of the name down here and not the power of the name ; "Jesus," he declares, is really a substitute for a very ancient name, and its power is known to the "elect" alone of the Christians. Was this mystery name, then, Iexai ?

Sobiaï-Sophia. But even so we have not yet done with names in this connection. Hippolytus ("Philos.," ix. 13) will have it that the "Book of Elxai" was said to have been revealed to Elxai, whom he regards as a man, and that this Elchasaï, as he spells the name, handed it on to a certain Sobiaï. Now as we have already seen that in every probability the teaching of the Book was set forth in the form of an apocalyptic vision, as revealed by Elxai or the Sophia or Wisdom, and that the man Elxai is a fiction of the imagination begotten by patristic misunderstanding, so also it may be that Sobiaï is also an apocalyptic personification historicized by the same class of mind which historicized and materialized so much else that was purely mystic and spiritual. In fact I would suggest that Sobiaï is nothing else than a

transformation of Sophia, for as Epiphanius himself says, though with a sneer, the Book purported to be written prophetically, or, as it were, by the inspiration of Wisdom (Sophia).

Yet again more names are brought forward by Epiphanius in this connection, and he has somewhat to tell us of two sisters called Marthūs and Marthana (or Marthīna), who, he avers, were regarded with great reverence by the adherents of the tradition of this early Gnosis; they were, he says, worshipped as goddesses. Our great inquisitor of heresy, however, will have it that they were actual women living in his own times. Moreover, and in this he lets more escape him than he would have done had he understood, they were of the "race of Elxai" ("Hær.," xix. 1, and li. 1).¹

Marthus and
Marthana.

Now it is of service in this connection to remember that Martha in Aramaic means simply "Mistress" or "Lady"; Martha is the feminine of Mar ("Lord").² Can it then be possible that here also we are face to face with some more scraps of the scattered *débris* of the once most elaborate Christos-Sophia-mythus?

Our Lady
Martha.

Nay, this is not altogether a so wild speculation as the general reader may suppose, for do we not find in the Syriac Hymns of the Gnostic Bardaisan (155-233 A.D.), that the Holy Spirit, the Mother, the Sophia,

The Sophia
and her Twin
Daughters.

¹ In this connection we may pertinently ask the question: Who are the Gnostics whose tenets Origen ("C. Celsum," v. 62) tells us were known to Celsus, that is to say, at least as early as 175 A.D., and who were known as "those of Martha"?

² One bold scholar has even suggested that Mar being in Syriac a general title of distinction, Epiphanius has mistaken the names of two bishops of unorthodox views for the names of women, and so developed his romance,

has two daughters, whose birth the orthodox Ephraem, the most bitter opponent of the Bardesanian Gnosis, writing more than a century later, declines to explain, and who were, in the poetical nomenclature of Bardaisan, called respectively "Shame of the Dry" and "Image of the Water."¹ The Mother Sophia thus addresses the elder of them :

" Let her who comes after thee
To me be a daughter,
A sister to thee."

The
" Impure "
and the
" Virgin "
Wombs.

Ephraem makes a great to-do about the mystery of their conception, which he says he is ashamed to relate. It appears, however, to have been nothing more than the conception of the Mother first without her Syzygy or Divine Consort, and subsequently with Him; the bringing forth of the "Abortion" and of the "Perfect Æon"—the fruit of the "impure womb" above when the mother disobeyed the "law of pairing" of the Plerōma, and desired to imitate the Father over all and create without a Syzygy, and the child of the "virgin womb," in the spiritual economy of the world process; all of which is set forth with much elaboration in several forms of the Sophia-mythus which have come down to us in the quotations of the hæresiological Fathers. In the microcosm or man, these daughters are presumably two aspects of the human soul, the Sophia below, or sorrowing one; tending downward she is regarded as the "lustful one" (Prunicus), the harlot; tending upward she becomes the spouse of the Christos.

¹ See Hilgenfeld (A.), "Bardesanes der letzte Gnostiker" (Leipzig; 1864), pp. 40, 41; and Lipsius (R. A.), "Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten" (Braunschweig; 1883), i. pp. 310, 311.

Again in the Greek Acts of Thomas, which still contain many early Gnostic traces in spite of Catholic redaction, we read :

"Come . . . Thou Holy Dove who art mother of twin young ones ; come Hidden Mother !"

Have we here, then, our Marthus and Marthana ? Mary and Martha.
Are the "sisters" of Epiphanius, then, simply misunderstood forms of the Sophia in one of her many transformations ? Will the dire straits into which relentless historical criticism is forcing the defenders of an unyielding conservatism, permit us to believe that there may have been a mystery-teaching behind the beautiful historicized story of the sisters Mary and Martha and of Lazarus, their brother, who was "raised from the dead" after being "three days" in the grave ? Was not Lazarus raised as a "mummy," swathed in grave clothes ?¹ What has this to do with the mystery-tradition of Egypt ? Is not the Mary of Lazarus thought by many to have been the Magdalene, the courtesan, out of whom He had cast seven devils ? Was not the Sophia below called the "lustful one," the "harlot," the "shame of the dry" ? Was not the Helen of Simon also called the harlot ? Was not even Jesus, according to the Jews, the son of a harlot ? Can it possibly be that in this vulgar material controversy of things physical between Christian and Jew,

¹ It is somewhat strange to find Tertullian ("De Corona," viii. ; Oehler, i. 436) referring to the "linen cloth" with which Jesus girt himself, mentioned in John xiii. 4, 5, as the "proper garment of Osiris." The "proper garment of Osiris," of course, consisted of the linen-wrappings of the mummy. Tertullian thus appears to have picked up a phrase he did not quite understand, and used it inappropriately.

there may be, in spite of the controversialists on either side, still some grain of mystic truth almost miraculously preserved? Why, again, had Mary the better part, though Martha was the more laborious and virtuous? Has orthodox exegesis a satisfactory answer to this "dark saying"? Is not its exact parallel to be found in the mystery-parable of the prodigal and his elder brother?

Such are a few of the questions which rush in upon the mind of a student of the ancient Christian Gnosis, and make it not illegitimate to speculate as to whether under the names Marthus and Marthana may not be concealed a key to unlock the under-meaning of the beautiful Gospel story of Mary and Martha.

The
Merinthians.

Finally we have seen that Epiphanius gives Marthina as a variant of Marthana. Now it is remarkable that Epiphanius also tells us of some heretics whom he calls Merinthiani ("Hær.," xxix. 8). Of the origin or meaning of this name he admits he knows nothing, and can only suggest that they are derived from a certain Merinthus, who he suggests is identical with the famous early Gnostic Cerinthus; however, he confesses that this is a pure guess on his part. Can it, then, be by any means possible that the name Merinthiani is a transformation of Marthiani? No one but Epiphanius knows of these Merinthians. Did he invent the name? If not, and there really was a circle or line of tradition bearing some such name, can it be that our famous heresy-hunter heard wrongly, and remembered vaguely that it was some name like Cerinthus, only beginning with M. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ!*

The question, however, which is of greatest import-

ance for us, is to discover what were the views concerning the Christ held by those who used the Apocalypse of Elxai as one of their scriptures.

As we have seen, the main apocalyptic element of this Book was a vision of two great beings standing side by side—the Christus (“Hær.,” xix. 1) and Sophia above (“Hær.,” xxx. 3, 17), the male-female Heavenly Man in separation; the male potency was also called the Son of God, the female the Holy Spirit (Hipp., “Philos.,” ix. 13).

The Christology of the Book of Elxai.

In the human economy, however, “Christus” was apparently, according to Epiphanius (“Hær.,” liii. 1), not considered as absolutely identical with deity; this was in its microcosmic sense apparently the spiritual Self in man. This Self had been first clothed with the paradisiacal “Body of Adam,” but had put it off and left it behind in Paradise, the super-celestial garment left in the “last limit” till the glorious day of the revestiture of the Conqueror, according to the so-called Pistis-Sophia document, or the “robe of glory” of the beautiful hymn of Bardaisan,¹—He had put it off when He descended through the spheres, clothing Himself in each in the “garb of a servant,” but at the last He shall resume it again in triumph.

Of this Christus the Sophia, or human soul, was the sister or spouse; He was called the Great King (“Hær.,” xix. 3). But Epiphanius can find nothing in the teaching of these early mystics to confirm his own later orthodox views concerning “Jesus Christ,” and is naturally very puzzled at the unhistorical nature of their

Many Manifestations of the Christ.

¹ See the “Hymn of the Robe of Glory” in my “Fragments,” pp. 406–414, and also my translation of Pistis-Sophia (London; 1896), pp. 9 ff.

universal transcendentalism. Hippolytus ("Philos.," ix. 14), however, tells us that their teaching concerning the Christ of the general Christians—that is, concerning Jesus—was that he was born as are all other men; they denied that the Christ of their mysteries had been now for the first time born of a virgin; the mystery Christ had been born before, nay, had again and again been born, and was being born, and had been and was being manifested, changing His births and passing from body to body.

Theodoret, writing in the fifth century, gives us some further confused information when treating of the Elcesæans.¹ As to this mystery of the Christ, they said that He was not one—that is to say, apparently He was not simply Jesus the Nazarene, as the general Christians believed. There was, they held, a Christ above, and a Christ below; the former had of old indwelt in many, and had subsequently descended, that is, presumably, found full expression.

Theodoret imagines that this means descended into Jesus, or had come down to earth; but even so he cannot understand the doctrine and gets hopelessly confused over what they say concerning Jesus. For sometimes, he says, they state that He is a spirit, sometimes that He had a virgin for mother, while in other writings they say that this was not so, but that he was born as other men; further they teach that Jesus (or rather the Christ in Jesus) reincarnates again and again and goes into other bodies, and at each birth appears differently.

The Twice-
Born.

All of this, though apparently a hopeless confusion to the ordinary mind, is quite clear to the mystic, and it is

¹ "De Elcesæis," in his "Hereticarum Fabularum Compendium."

strange that with all their marvellous industry scholars have not been able to disinter the main conceptions of this all-illuminating idea from the polemical writings of the Church Fathers; all the more so as it is clearly stated in other early writings which have fortunately escaped out of the general destruction, as we shall show elsewhere. But with regard to our present special subject of research, we cannot leave it without giving what seems to be as good a proof as can be expected in early Christian literature, that the Elxai teaching went back to a very early date; for even the few scattered quotations which we are enabled to extract from Patristic polemical literature show this very clearly.

It is well known that the Essenes and allied communities, even while they remained on the ground of Judaism, were strongly opposed to the blood sacrifices and burnt offerings of the Temple. When, then, we find a quotation from the "Book of Elxai" which distinctly refers to these sacrifices, we cannot be accused of rashness in concluding that this document, or at any rate part of it, existed in days when the Temple sacrifices were still kept up, that is to say, prior to 70 A.D., when the Temple was destroyed and the sacrifices, which could only be performed in it, ceased.

A Further
Date
Indication.

Referring to this very condemnation of the Temple blood sacrifices at Jerusalem, Epiphanius ("Hær.," xix. 3) quotes from the "Book of Elxai" as follows:

"My sons, go not to the image of the fire, for ye err; for this image is error. Thou seest it [the fire], he says, very near, yet is it from afar. Go not to its image; but go rather to the voice of the water!"

Fire and
Water.

This is evidently an instruction not to visit the

Temple at Jerusalem. The reason is given in a quotation apparently from a still more ancient writing, for the number is changed from "ye" to "thou," and the written sign of quotation "he says" is introduced. Now we know that these mystics worshipped the spiritual Sun, as the masculine potency of the Logos, the real "Fire" of the "Simonian" Gnosis. The expression "voice of the water" appears at first sight to be exceedingly strange; when, however, we recollect that those Gnostics regarded "Water" as the "source of all things," not of course the physical element, the "image" of the Water, but the "Water of Life," the Life (Sophia) being the spouse of the Light (Christos),—she who was the Mother of all,—the "voice of the water" may very well be taken as a mystic expression for the "voice" of the Holy Spirit, in brief the "voice of conscience," as may be seen from many verses of the later penitential psalms, in which the physical sacrifices are set aside and the doctrine of the truly spiritual sacrifice of the heart inculcated. What else can this "voice" be than the Bath-kol,¹ the "heavenly voice" to which the prophets gave ear, according to these same mystics and later Talmudism?

Ichthus. This water, then, was the Sea of Life, and much might be said concerning it. It is by the shore of this Sea that is the Mountain on which "after the resurrection" Jesus, the Living One, assembles His Taxis, or Order of Twelve, and shows them the mysteries of the inner spaces, taking them within with Himself as described in one of the treatises of the Codex Brucianus. It will, however, for the moment suffice to remind our readers

¹ Lit. "Daughter of the Voice."

that the "fish" (*ichthus*) was one of the earliest symbols of the Christ. Not only so, but the early Christian neophytes were called "little fishes," and even at the end of the second century Tertullian is found writing: "We little fishes (*pisciculi*), according to our Fish (*Ichthus*), are born in water." It would take us too long to follow up this interesting trace, but the idea will not be so difficult to grasp if we quote part of the famous Autun sepulchral inscription, discovered in 1839, the date of which early monument is hotly disputed, the battle ranging over dates from the second to the sixth century. Marriott translates this precious relic of the past as follows:

"Offspring of the Heavenly Ichthus (Fish), see that a heart of holy reverence be thine, now that from divine waters thou hast received, while yet among mortals, a fount of life that is to immortality. Quicken thy soul, beloved one, with the ever-flowing waters of wealth-giving Wisdom [*Sophia*], and receive the honey-sweet food of the Saviour of the saints. Eat with a longing hunger holding Ichthus in thy hands."¹

The Autun
Inscription.

There is a curious analogy between these ideas and some of those of which we have a few traces in the inscriptions found on golden tablets in graves at Thurii in what was once Magna Græcia, and elsewhere. It is supposed that there was a sort of Orphic or Pythagorean Book of the Dead, "The Passing into Hades" or "The Descent into Hades," from which some of these inscriptions quote. These tablets were evidently placed in

¹ See art. "Ichthus," in Smith and Cheetham's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities" (London; 1875).

the graves of ancient Orphic or Pythagorean initiates, and on one of them we read :

From "The
Descent into
Hades."

"In the mansions of Hades, upon the left, a spring wilt thou find, and near it a white cypress standing ; this spring thou shouldst not approach. But there [to the right] wilt thou come on another, from Memory's lake a fresh flowing water. Before it are watchers : To them shalt thou say : 'Of Earth and starry Heaven child am I, my race is of the heavens. But this ye must know of yourselves. With thirst I parch, I perish ; quick, give me to drink of the water fresh flowing from Memory's lake ! Then will they give thee to drink of the spring of the gods, and then shalt thou reign with the rest of the heroes.'"¹

Moreover the connection between this wonderful symbolism of the "living water" of these early Christian mystic schools and the beautiful gospel story of the woman of Samaria and the Christ, and with the many fish figures introduced elsewhere in the gospel narratives, must strike even the least observant.

Fish and the
Eucharist.

It is also to be noticed that the "fish" played some important part in one of the variants of the eucharistic rite (the five loaves and two fishes) of early Christianity, and it is also of great interest to remember the very simple form of the covenant meal of the earliest Essene-Christians of whom we are treating was bread

¹ "Inscr. Gr. Siciliæ et Italiæ," 638. See also Foucart (P.), "Recherches sur l'Origine et la Nature des Mystères d'Eleusis," "Extr. des Mém. de l'Acad. des Ins. et Belles-Lettres" (Paris ; 1895), tom. xxxv., 2^e partie, pp. 68 ff ; and also my articles "Notes on the Eleusinian Mysteries" in the "Theosophical Review" (London ; 1898), vol. xxii., pp. 145 ff., 232 ff., 312 ff., 317 ff.

and salt, or bread and water, the fruit of the Sun and Sea, for they eschewed wine.

The "Book of Elxai," then, in one of its deposits at any rate, for it was doubtless edited and re-edited as were so many other of these early documents, apparently went back to as early as at least 70 A.D., while even in that deposit we find an earlier scripture quoted. Moreover, all that is told us of these early "Christians," for they looked to the mystic Christ as the ideal of all their aspiration, is of a very primitive stamp, and in closest contact with much that we learn concerning the Essenes and Therapeuts. I am, therefore, persuaded that we are here in touch with a body of ideas that for all we know may have been Pre-Pauline, and that we are not far from discovering one of the most mysterious factors in the genesis of the great religion of the Western world.

The An-
tiquity to the
Elxai
Tradition.

Before, however, closing this chapter on the mysterious "Elxai," who, as we have seen, never existed, and yet always is, there is to be mentioned a scrap of information which may throw some further light on this earliest and most widespread "heresy" of Christendom.

We have already seen that some remnants of these early teachings are preserved even to-day by the Mandæites, or so-called Christians of St. John. It is, therefore, of interest to learn that "Elcasæans," distinctly so named, were still in existence in the tenth century. Mahammed ben Is'haq en-Nedim, in his "Fihrist" (written in 987-988 A.D.) tells us concerning the Mogtasilah, or Baptists, that they were then very numerous in the marsh districts between the Arabian

The
Mogtasilah.

desert and the Tigris and Euphrates. Their head, he says, was called el'Hasai'h (Elchasai), and he was the original founder of their confession. This el'Hasai'h had a disciple called Schimun.¹

The Schimun
of Elxai.

Hilgenfeld² thinks that Schimun may be Sobiaï, but in my opinion Schimun (Shimeon or Simon), if he were ever a mortal, is more likely to have been Simon Magus, and this would confirm the early date of the Elxai teaching. Or if this is thought to be too precise, then the Schimun of Elxai, the Holy Spirit, may have originally had some connection with Shemesh, the spiritual Sun of the Sampsæans and Simonians, the Spouse of the Spirit or Water, Helena (Selene) or Luna, the Moon, and the irresponsibility of legend has "deranged the epitaphs."

Elceseï-
Cephar-
naum.

Finally we must remember that the prophet Nahum, a name meaning "rich in comfort" or the "comforter," is called the Elkoshite ("Nah," i. 1), a name given in the Greek translation of the so-called Seventy as Elkesaios.³ Moreover Jerome and Epiphanius (or pseudo-Epiph.) tell us that this prophet was born at a village in Galilee called Elkesei.⁴ It is, further, to be remembered that Cephar-naum means the village or town of Nahum, and here it was that Jesus began his ministry, and where he specially laboured. Moreover we read in the narrative of the first evangelist (Matt.

¹ See Chwolsohn, "Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus" (St. Petersburg; 1856), ii. pp. 543. ff.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 232.

³ See Budde's art. "Elkoshite" in the "Encyclopædia Biblica."

⁴ Hieron., "Comm. in Naum," præfat., Opp., vi. 535; Epiph., "De Vitis Prophetarum," c. 18. See Hilgenfeld, *op. sup. cit.*, p. 231.

ix. 1): "And he entered into a ship, and passed over (the Lake of Galilee), and came into *his own city*"—which the parallel passage in Mark (ii. 1) gives as Capernaum. What curious coincidences for a lover of Talmudic and allied riddles!

XIX.—THE 100 YEARS B.C. DATE IN EPIPHANIUS.

The Over-
Confidence of
Epiphanius.

WE have already seen that Epiphanius, filled with fiery zeal to play the Hercules in defence of his own special form of Church orthodoxy, is possessed of a magnificent confidence in his own ability to smite off every head of the many-necked hydra-serpent of heresy, and so to cauterise the stumps that no head shall ever again grow therefrom to give articulate utterance to error. His self-confidence, however, is so overweening, that he at times becomes quite reckless; so much so that he has bequeathed to posterity a mass of interesting evidence which would otherwise have entirely disappeared, and which enables the independent thinker to raise a number of questions of the greatest importance for the unprejudiced historian of Christian beginnings.

Epiphanius
and the
Jannai Date.

Even with regard to our general subject of enquiry, we have already seen that the Bishop of Salamis has had the hardihood to work the name Panther (Pandera) into the canonical genealogy of Jesus. Does he, however, give us any further information which can in any way explain his extraordinary behaviour in this matter? Strange to say he does, and that, too, information of an

even more startling nature; but before we bring forward the astonishing passages in which Epiphanius boldly weaves the Jewish Jannai date tradition, which contradicts the whole of traditional Christian history, into his elaborate exposition of the date of Jesus according to canonical views, we must supplement what we have already said about the general character of our author as a heresiologist, by quoting from the sober and moderate opinion of the greatest student of the writings of this stalwart champion of Nicene Christianity whom scholarship has so far produced. Lipsius, in his admirable article¹ on this interesting Church Father, writes as follows:

“An honest, but credulous and narrow-minded zealot for church orthodoxy, and notwithstanding the veneration in which he was held by episcopal colleagues, and still more in monastic circles, he was often found promoting divisions, where a more moderate course would have enabled him to maintain the peace of the churches. His violence of temper too often led him, especially in the Origenistic controversies, into an ill-considered and uncanonical line of conduct; and the narrow-minded spirit with which he was wont to deal with controverted questions contributed in no small degree to impose more and more oppressive fetters on the scientific [*sic*] theology of his times. . . .

The Character
of Epiphanius.

“His frequent journeys and exhaustive reading enabled him to collect a large but ill-arranged store of historical information, and this he used with much ingenuity in defending the church orthodoxy of his

¹ “Epiphanius of Salamis,” in Smith and Wace’s “Dict. of Christ. Biography.”

time, and opposing every kind of heresy. But as a man attached to dry literal formulas he exercised really very small influence on dogmatic theology, and his theological polemics were more distinguished by pious zeal than by impartial judgment and penetrating intelligence. He is fond of selecting single particulars, in which to exhibit the abominable nature of the errors he is combating. When one bears in mind that his whole life was occupied in the Origenistic controversy, his refutation of the doctrine of the Alexandrian theologian is quite astonishingly superficial, a few meagre utterances detached from their context, and in part thoroughly misunderstood, is all that he has to give us by way of characterising the object of his detestation, and yet at the same time he boasted of having read no less than 6000 of Origen's works, a much larger number, as Rufinus remarks, than the man had written. His credulity allows the most absurd relations to be imposed upon it; a heretic was capable of any abomination, nor did he think it at all necessary quietly to examine the charges made. . . .

The Value of
Epiphanius as
a Hæresio-
logist.

"The accounts he gives of the Jewish Christian and Gnostic sects . . . exhibit a marvellous mixture of valuable traditions with misunderstandings and fancies of his own. His pious zeal to excel all heresiologues who had gone before him, by completing the list of heretics, led him into the strangest misunderstandings, the most adventurous combinations, and arbitrary assertions. He often frames out of very meagre hints long and special narratives. The strangest phenomena are combined with total absence of criticism, and things which evidently belonged together are arbitrarily

separated. On the other hand, he often copies his authorities, with slavish dependence on them, and so puts it in the power of critical commentators to collect a rich abundance of genuine traditions from what seemed a worthless mass."

Such is the impartial and judicious estimate of the value of Epiphanius for our own day which Lipsius, after many years of most careful study of the writings of this puzzling Church Father, gives us. For his contemporaries the Bishop of Constantia was a most excellent and pious defender of the Faith, and for future generations of the Church he was a saint who went about working wonders, the recital of which out-miracles even the marvels of the gospel-narratives. It is no part of our task to read the shade of Epiphanius a sermon on literary morality; such a thing was not invented in his day in theological circles. We must take him as we find him, a profoundly interesting psychological study, and so make what we can out of his (from a critical standpoint) marvellously instructive heresiological patch-work. We thus leave the cult of Saint Epiphanius to those who may be benefited by it, and proceed to quote the most astonishing "logos" — as Epiphanius himself would have called it had he found it in an earlier Father — of this champion of Nicene orthodoxy and saint of Roman Catholicism.

In treating of the Nazoræi, the Bishop of Salamis enters into a long digression to prove that the statement in Psalm cxxxii. 11—"The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it, of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne"—is a Messianic

The Riddle of Epiphanius.

prophecy fulfilled in the person of Jesus. This, he says, is denied by some, but he will clearly show that it duly came to pass. He then proceeds with his argument as follows ("Hær.," xxix. 3):

"Now the throne and kingly seat of David is the priestly office in Holy Church; for the Lord combined the kingly and high-priestly dignities into one and the same office, and bestowed them upon His Holy Church, transferring to her the throne of David, which ceases not as long as the world endures. The throne of David continued by succession up to that time—namely, till Christ Himself—without any failure from the princes of Judah, until it came unto Him for whom were 'the things that are stored up,' who is Himself 'the expectation of the nations.'¹ For with the advent of the Christ, the succession of the princes from Judah, who reigned until the Christ Himself, ceased. The order [of succession] failed and stopped at the time when He was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Alexander, who was of high-priestly and royal race; and after this Alexander this lot failed, from the times of himself and Salina, who is also called Alexandra, for the times of Herod the King and Augustus Emperor of the Romans; and this Alexander, one of the anointed (or Christs) and ruling princes placed the crown on his own head. . . . After this a foreign king, Herod, and

¹ These quotations of Epiphanius refer to the Septuagint translation of Genesis xlix. 10, which, however, the Authorized Version renders: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Here "Shiloh" stands for "the things stored up," and "gathering" for "expectation."

those who were no longer of the family of David, assumed the crown." ¹

This passage is perhaps the most remarkable in the whole range of Patristic literature; it might very well be called the "Riddle of Epiphanius" *par excellence*, for it is the most enigmatic of all his puzzles. It is remarkable for many reasons, but most of all because no Father has given more minute indications of the date of Jesus, according to canonical data helped out by his own most positive assertions, than Epiphanius. Nevertheless here we have the Bishop of Salamis categorically asserting, with detailed reiteration, so that there is no possibility of escape, that Jesus was born in the days of Alexander and Salina, that is of Jannai and Salome; not only so, but he would have it that it needs must have been so, in order that prophecy, and prophecy of the most solemn nature, should be fulfilled that there should be no break in the succession of princes from the tribe of Judah, as it had been written. There is no possible way of extricating ourselves from the crushing weight of the incongruity of this statement of Epiphanius by trying to emend the reading of the text; for not only does the whole subject of his argument demand such a statement,

The Most
Remarkable
Passage in
Patristic
Literature.

¹ I use the most recent text of W. Dindorf (Leipzig; 1859-1862), who took as the groundwork of his edition the valuable and hitherto unused MS. in St. Mark's Library at Venice (Codex Marcianus 125), which is dated 1057 A.D. The MS. contains a much more original text than any of those previously used for our printed editions, the oldest MS. previously employed bearing date 1304 A.D. As Lipsius says: "With its help not only are we enabled to correct innumerable corruptions and arbitrary alterations of text made by later writers, but also to fill up numerous and very considerable lacunæ."

but he supports it by a number of subsidiary assertions.

Patent Errors
therein.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the Bishop of Salamis is in error as to the continuity of the kingly line from Judah, and as to the cessation of the kingly and high-priestly office with Jannæus. The priestly line had no connection with Judah, and the line of kings had long ceased, before the Hasmonæan Aristobulus, who was of priestly descent and not of Judah, assumed the crown in 105 B.C.; he did not succeed to it. Jannæus also assumed the high-priestly office. On the death of Jannæus, Alexandra became regent, and subsequently her sons Hyrcanus II. and Aristobulus II. enjoyed in succession the combined kingly and high-priestly dignities.

When, moreover, Epiphanius says that Alexander placed the crown on his own head, we are at a loss to understand him; some MSS., however, read "his" simply and not "his own" head, and this would mean, presumably, that Alexander placed the crown on the head of Jesus; that is to say, at his death the succession passed to Jesus.

The Silence
of the Com-
mentators.

So much for this part of Epiphanius' argument; but what of his extraordinary assertion that Jesus lived in the days of Jannai? So far, apparently, no commentator has been able to make anything out of it. The learned Jesuit Dionysius Petavius (Petau)—in the second edition of Epiphanius (Paris; 1622)—whose notes have been added to every subsequent edition of this Father, can make nothing of this "ghastly anachronism," as he calls it. He tries to arrive at a solution by transposing some of the sentences, but when he has done this, he

honestly confesses that he has no confidence in his attempt, for he finds precisely the same "confusion of history" repeated by Epiphanius in another passage. Indeed, so far I have been able to discover no commentator who has grappled with this Riddle of Epiphanius. They all leave it without remark where Petavius abandoned it in despair. Even "the valuable contributions to the criticism and exegesis of the Panarion," as Lipsius calls them, added to Œhler's edition¹ by Albert Jahn, breathe no word on the matter; while, as far as I am aware, Lipsius himself has not referred to the subject.

Petavius honestly admits that his attempted emendation of the text by a transposition of several of the sentences is perfectly illegitimate, for he has to reckon with precisely the same statement repeated further on in the voluminous writings of the worthy Bishop. In treating of the Alogi, who rejected the fourth Gospel, Epiphanius enters into a long discussion concerning the date of Jesus ("Hær.," li. 22 ff.). Without the slightest attempt at style or clarity, he piles together a mass of assertions to show that Jesus was born in the forty-second year of Augustus, "King" of the Romans; not only so, but he knows the month and the day and the hour. Epiphanius apparently counts the "first year" of Augustus, that is of Octavi[an]us, from the date of the murder of Julius Cæsar, 44 B.C., and therefore makes the date of the birth of Jesus fall in B.C. 2, when Octavian was consul for the thirteenth time with Sil[v]anus. This leaves Herod, who died in B.C. 4, out in the cold, and with him the murder of the

Epiphanius
on the
Canonical
Date.

¹ In his "Corpus Hæresiologicum," vols ii., iii. (Berlin; 1859-1861).

innocents and much else which the compiler of the first Gospel thought of importance ; but this does not seem to bother the Bishop of Salamis, for he appears to have no suspicion of the conclusions which can be drawn from his confident assertions. This, however, is a very minor point.

Mystically
Necessitated
Numbers.

In giving the age of Jesus at the beginning of the ministry as thirty years, Epiphanius follows evangelical precedent, but he adds a remark that is not without significance ("Hær.," li. 23). "It is because of this,"¹ he continues, "that the former heresies which grouped themselves round Valentinus and others fell to pieces ; these set forth their thirty æons in mythologic fashion, thinking that they conformed to the years of Jesus." There are those who would be inclined to argue the very opposite ; but this need not detain us, except to remark that Epiphanius, after adding the further precise number "three" for the years of the ministry, uses a two-edged sword when he proceeds to say :

"For it is in the thirty-third year of His advent in the flesh that the passion of the Alone-begotten comes to pass, of Him who is the impassible Logos from above, but who took on flesh to suffer on our behalf, in order that He might blot out the writing of Death against us."²

Epiphanius
repeats his
Riddle.

In the midst of these categorical assertions the Bishop of Salamis in a most confused paragraph writes :

"From the time that Augustus became Emperor, for

¹ That is, the exact number of thirty years.

² Cf. "Coloss.," ii. 14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us."

four years, more or less, from [the beginning of] his reign, there had been friendship between the Romans and Jews, and contributions of troops had been sent, and a governor appointed, and some portion of tribute paid to the Romans, until Judæa was made [entirely] subject and became tributary to them, its rulers having ceased from Judah, and Herod being appointed [as ruler] from the Gentiles, being a proselyte, however, and Christ being born in Bethlehem of Judæa, and coming for the preaching [of the Gospel], the anointed rulers from Judah and Aaron having ceased, after continuing until the anointed ruler Alexander and Salina who was also Alexandra; in which days the prophecy of Jacob was fulfilled: 'A ruler shall not cease from Judah and a leader from his thighs, until he come for whom it is laid up, and he is the expectation of the nations'¹—that is, the Lord who was born."

We may conveniently omit any discussion of the precise dates of the various changes in the political relationship between Roman and Jew; the point that interests us is that Epiphanius repeats categorically his puzzling statement about Jannæus and Salome and the date of Jesus, and again brings this into the closest relation with what he regards as a most solemn prophecy and promise in "Genesis." There is no possible way of escape from the conclusion that Epiphanius is arguing most deliberately that the kingly and high-priestly offices were transferred immediately from Jannai to Jesus, so that there should be no break in the succession.

"In Order
that it might
be Fulfilled as
it is Written."

¹ Epiphanius quotes this with a different reading from his previous citation.

This argument is historically absurd, as we have already seen ; we have now to consider whether there was any other reason in the strangely irrational mind of Epiphanius for this historicizing of a dogmatic speculation, which he himself immediately contradicts by going into the most minute arguments to prove that Jesus was born at a date which was 77 years later than the death of Alexander. We will preface our enquiry by a quotation from a recent address¹ by Dr. James Drummond to the students of Manchester College, Oxford, in which Epiphanius is brought into court.

Drummond
on Criticism.

"Justin Martyr tells us that when Christ was born in Bethlehem, Joseph, not having where to lodge in the village, lodged in a certain cave close to the village ('Dial.,' lxxviii.). It is therefore plausibly argued that his gospel was different from ours. But when we find the statement in Origen that agreeably to the history of his (Christ's) birth in the gospel, the cave in Bethlehem where he was born is pointed out ('C. Cels.,' i. 51), and learn that Epiphanius, in endeavouring to harmonise the accounts in Matthew and Luke, expressly affirms that 'Luke says that the boy, as soon as he was born, was wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lay in a manger and in a cave, because there was no room in the inn' ('Hær.,' li. 9), we must view the argument quite differently, for that which would prove an absurdity, if applied to Origen and Epiphanius, cannot have any weight in its application to Justin. The fact seems to be that all alike rely upon a tradition that Christ was born in a cave, and assume that this is sufficiently

¹ "Remarks on the Art of Criticism in its Application to Theological Questions" (Manchester ; 1902).

indicated by Luke's allusion to a manger, just as in modern times the same allusion leads to the supposition that the birth took place in a stable, the stable being really as foreign to the evangelical text as the cave."¹

Whether Epiphanius in this was "endeavouring to harmonise" Matthew and Luke is somewhat beside the point, for Matthew has nothing about swaddling clothes, manger or inn, while Luke (ii. 7) says: "She brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." What is clear is that Epiphanius was seeking to "harmonise" Luke with a very ancient tradition which he (Epiphanius) could not afford to disregard, and in order to effect his "harmony" he has no hesitation in roundly declaring that Luke states that the manger was in a cave.²

The "Harmonising" Industry of Epiphanius.

From this and from other instances we see that the Bishop of Salamis sought to dispose of ancient extra-canonical traditions by boldly incorporating them with canonical data, and in so doing he had not the slightest hesitation roundly to assert that data derived from

¹ See, however, "Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew" (xiv.): "Now on the third day after the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the most blessed Mary went out of the cave, and, entering a stable, put her child in a manger, and the ox and ass adored him."

² The "cave" tradition is also preserved in the apocryphal "Gospel of James" (c. xviii.), and in the "Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew" (c. xiii.), and in the Arabic "Gospel of the Infancy" (c. iii). It is still an open question whether or not the "originals" of these Gospels may have been of an early date, in fact, whether they may not have been included among the "many" of the introduction to the third canonical Gospel. They were doubtless edited, re-edited and transformed, but some of their elements seem to be ancient.

ancient traditions, but not found in canonical scripture, were actually part and parcel of the orthodox evangelical record. This was his way of disposing of inconvenient early traditions to which, we must suppose, even in his day, a wide circulation was still given.

His Magnificent Inconsistency.

Can it then be that Epiphanius did not invent this astonishing statement as to the birth of Jesus in the days of Jannæus, but that he is simply carrying out his plan of weaving inconvenient data into an orthodox texture? I have little doubt myself that this is the case. But think of the magnificent inconsistency of the thing; try to imagine the state of mind that could seriously weave together those gorgeous incongruities! Truly a heavy retribution for those who developed the "in order that it might be fulfilled" theory of history. Epiphanius is dazzled with his own exegesis of prophecy; the Church was the legitimate heiress of the royal and high-priestly dignities of Jewry, bequeathed to her by Jesus Himself! A brilliant idea had come to him, and he would work it out for the greater glory of the Church. He accordingly sets out to argue the unbroken line of succession of the princes from Judah, in the face of all history, for the Hasmonæan or Maccabæan dynasty was not from Judah at all, since Mattathias himself was the son of John, a priest of the order of Joarib, and long before then the kingly line had ceased. Why, then, if the Bishop of Salamis can so easily set the plainest facts of history aside in support of his theory, should he hesitate to have brought down the combined offices to the days of Herod, for Herod made the Hasmonæan Aristobulus III. high priest about 36 B.C., and this might have given Epiphanius a chance to argue that

Aristobulus was really the legitimate king and priest combined, Herod being an upstart?

Why should Epiphanius have hit on Alexander, of all people in the world, as the person to whom Jesus succeeded in these combined offices? True it is that Alexander as a historical fact did combine these offices in his own person, but so did his son Hyrcanus II. in 67 B.C., from whom subsequently his brother Aristobulus II. wrested the titles, until in 63 Pompey constituted Syria a Roman province, leaving Judæa, Galilee and Peræa to the restored high priest Hyrcanus in subordination to the governor of the province, while he took Aristobulus and his children with him to Rome. Revolt followed on revolt in favour of the Maccabæan dynasty, but the hopes of Jewish patriotism were finally put an end to by the elevation of the Idumæan Herod to the kingly dignity in 37 B.C., and Herod made it his business to wipe out the remaining male descendants of the Hasmonæan princes, and finally succeeded in his task of extermination about 25 B.C., when he put to death the sons of Baba.

Turn the matter over as one will, there seems no escape from the conclusion that there was some other deciding factor in the mind of Epiphanius besides the simple fascination of his dogmatic theory, strong as that was. It would seem that the Bishop of Salamis was overjoyed to find that he could kill two birds with one stone, enhance the glory of the Church, and slay an ancient foe who had greatly inconvenienced him in the past. This ancient foe was the tradition that Jesus had lived in the days of Jannai; it was this inconvenient tradition which Epiphanius thought to dispose of by working it into his dogmatic theory and elaborating it

The *Bête*
Noir of
Epiphanius.

in historic terms. The horrible incongruity of his statements does not seem to have in the least disturbed the self-complacency of the Church Father; least of all does he seem to have had any suspicion that he was handing on to posterity the very thing which he desired to slay once for all.

Whence, then, did Epiphanius derive this tradition? It might be argued that he got it from the "Essenes," or from some other of the allied communities with which he had come into contact. But of this we cannot be sure, for we have no precise *data* upon which we can go. This much, however, we may say with confidence, it derived originally from Jewish sources, and formed no part of the tradition based on the Hellenized Christianity of Paul and the Evangelists. Indeed, we have already seen that this is not the only instance in which Epiphanius has treated Jewish tradition with a similar subtlety of *finesse*.

Epiphanius
and the
"Histories,"

Our great heresiologue is arguing against those who venture to assert, as indeed they must if they follow the clear statements of the Evangelists, that Mary had other children besides Jesus. He says ("Hær.," lxxviii. 7) that such an assertion is due to the ignorance of those who are not acquainted with the Holy Scriptures and who have not studied the "Histories." The truth of the matter is that the Virgin was given to Joseph, because the lot so fell out, referring presumably to the story preserved in the apocryphal "Gospel of James" and elsewhere.¹ She was not given to Joseph to wife in the

¹ "Gospel of James," ix.; "Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew," viii.; "Gospel of the Nativity of Mary," viii.; "History of Joseph the Carpenter," iv.

ordinary sense, for he was a widower and of extreme old age. It was "on account of the law," whatever that may mean, that he was called her husband. For "according to the succession from the tradition of the Jews," it is proved that the Virgin was not given to Joseph for the ordinary purpose of marriage, but in order that she might be kept for the testimony of the future, that "the dispensation of His advent in the flesh was not [a] bastard [birth]." For how, Epiphanius goes on to say, could a man of such great age (as he assumes Joseph to have been) have a virgin to wife, after he had been so many years a widower? For this Joseph was the brother of Clophas, and son of Jacob surnamed Panther. Both of these were sons of this Panther.

Now it is to be observed in the first place that Epiphanius distinctly refers to a certain "succession from the tradition of the Jews," that is to say, apparently a tradition handed on from generation to generation to his own time, and afterwards he asserts that this tradition proves that Mary was legally married to Joseph, in order that there might be no charge of bastardy with regard to the miraculously-born Jesus. Whereas we know on the contrary that this was what the Jewish Pandera tradition did not state, but the very opposite. The Bishop of Salamis is arguing against the accusation of bastardy, and meets the charge with his usual boldness by invoking as witnesses on his side the very sources which make most directly against his assertion. Nor can there be any escape from this, for immediately afterwards he dextrously inserts Panther (Pandera) into the genealogy of

The
"Succession
from the
Tradition of
the Jews."

Jesus on the father's side ; and here it is interesting to observe that, as Joseph is said to have been very old,¹ say some eighty years, and that Joseph was son of Panther, Panther is to be placed about 100 B.C.

The Children
of Joseph.

Epiphanius, then, beyond all question knows of the Jewish traditions concerning Jesus ; he knows of the name Ben Pandera and also of the Mamzer legends. But this is not all, for, in arguing for the perpetual virginity of Mary, he goes on to tell us, that Joseph had six children by his first wife, four sons and two daughters, and the former were the "brethren" mentioned in the Gospels. The eldest son was called Jacob, otherwise Oblias (*sic*), who was a Nazoræan (he means Nazir), commonly called the "brother of the Lord." He was the first Christian bishop. This son Joseph begat when he was forty years of age, and after him were born Jose, Simeon and Judas, and two daughters Maria and Salome.²

James.

If Joseph had been a widower so many years before he married the Virgin as to make Epiphanius exclaim over their number, we must suppose that his widowhood dated from about his fiftieth year, and that perhaps he was eighty when he entered on his second purely legal nuptials. This would make Jacob some forty years old at the time of the birth of Jesus according to the common reckoning (B.C. 4), and one hundred

¹ Cf. "History of Joseph the Carpenter," where Joseph is called "widower" (ii.), and "a pious old man" (iv., *et passim*), and where he is said to have been 111 years old when he died (v.).

² The "History of Joseph the Carpenter" gives these names as Judas, Justus, James and Simon, and the daughters as Assia and Lydia (ii.) ; and Assia is further mentioned as apparently the elder of the daughters (xx.).

and seven years old when he was martyred by Jewish zealots in about 63 A.D.,¹ a somewhat advanced age, even for a rigid ascetic. But it is unnecessary seriously to follow Epiphanius in his wild assertions in the interests of an ever-developing dogmatism.

The point that interests us most deeply in his bold statement is the question of the names of these supposed step-brothers and step-sisters of Jesus. Jacob, Joseph, Simeon and Judas are all common enough Jewish names, and so are Miriam and Salome. But Epiphanius seems to be up to his tricks again and to have worked the names of Mary and Salome into the family of Joseph, just as he has worked Pandera into the genealogy of Jesus. For while we can find some data in the canonical records which may enable us to conjecture some reason for Epiphanius bringing forward Jacob, Joseph (Jose), Simeon and Judas, as names of "brethren of the Lord," there is nothing to warrant his introduction of the names of Maria and Salome.

Salome is only mentioned ("Mk.," xv. 40) as a woman present at the crucifixion, and afterwards ("Mk.," xvi. 1) as a visitor to the sepulchre. "Nothing else is known of her, though there are many conjectures, of which the principal is that she was a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. In support of this view may be cited a reading of the Peshitta version of Jos. xix. 25 (*cf.* also the Jerus. Syr. lectionary), and a presumptive unlikelihood, on account of the similarity of names, that Mary the wife of Clopas was a sister of the mother of Jesus."²

The Names
of the Sisters
of Jesus.

Salome and
Maria.

¹ See Cone's art. "James" in "Enc. Bib."

² See Moss' art. "Salome" in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible."

In the "Gospel of James" (xix.), however, Salome is the name of the midwife who delivered Mary ; while in the "Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew" there are two midwives, Zelomi and Salome (evidently a double). "The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew" (xlii.) also contains the following interesting passage: "Now when Joseph came to a feast with his sons, James, Joseph, and Judah, and Simeon, and his two daughters, Jesus and Mary, his mother, met them, together with her sister Mary the daughter of Cleophas, whom the Lord God gave to Cleophas her father and Anna her mother because they had offered to the Lord Mary the mother of Jesus." One might almost fancy that a twin of Epiphanius had had a hand in the redaction.

Salome and
Miriam.

On the other hand we have seen that in the Jewish legends, based on earlier tradition, Miriam the mother is said to have been related to Helene (Salome), and we know that Simeon (ben Shetach) was the brother of Salome (Alexandra). Can it then be that here again Epiphanius is influenced by Jewish tradition ? If so, it would be a strong confirmation of our hypothesis with regard to the Helene puzzle, for here in Epiphanius we find that the name Salome appears undisguised.

Epiphanius a
Converted
Jew.

It thus is not only certain that Epiphanius was acquainted with such main factors of Jewish tradition with regard to Jesus as the by-name Ben Pandera and the 100 years B.C. date, but it also appears probable that he was acquainted with the other details. Nor is this surprising, for not only did Epiphanius know some Hebrew,¹ but he also spoke Aramaic or Syriac. More-

¹ Though not as much as he had the credit of knowing. "His learning was much celebrated," says Lipsius ; "he was said to have

over, he was a Jew by birth, and his parents remained faithful to the Law till the day of their death.¹ He was born in Palestine at Eleutheropolis, and was converted in early youth to Christianity. The exact date of his birth is unknown, but may be conjecturally placed about 315 A.D. After spending some years among the monks of Egypt, Epiphanius, who was still only a youth of twenty, returned home, and founded a monastery near Besanduke, over which he presided until elected to the see of Constantia in Cyprus in 367 A.D. He thus spent no less than fifteen years of his boyhood and thirty-two years (335-367) of his manhood in Palestine, with which indeed he was closely connected till the end of his long life in 403.

Everything, therefore, is in favour of his being acquainted with the Jewish traditions concerning Jesus, and we may be confident that the sources of these very curious scraps of information, dropped in the course of his indiscriminate and indiscreet polemic, are the same as those from which the Talmud compilers and Toldoth writers drew—the living oral tradition of Jewry.

The Living
Oral Tradition
of Jewry.

But before finally leaving this very interesting but impolitic champion of Church orthodoxy, we must bring forward another passage from Epiphanius, which, though having no immediate bearing on our subject, is of the greatest possible importance for the critical study of Christian origins.

spoken four languages,—Hebrew, Syriac, Egyptian, Greek, and also a little Latin, for which Rufinus satirised him with the remark that he thought it his duty as an evangelist to speak evil of Origen, among all nations in all tongues." *Art. sup. cit.*

¹ Photius, "Bibliotheca," cod. cxxiv,

We have already stated that all the editions of the "Panarion" prior to that of Dindorf were based on MSS. which had been greatly bowdlerized and "emended." The very early Codex Marcianus 125, however, has enabled us to correct much of this "emendation" and to supply many very important lacunæ. The following is one of the censured passages ("Hær.," li, 22).

The Birthday
of the Christ.

"The Saviour was born in the forty-second year of Augustus, King of the Romans, in the consulship of the same Octavi[an]us Augustus (for the thirteenth time) and of Sil[v]anus, according to the consular calendar among the Romans. For it is recorded in it as follows: When these were consuls (I mean Octavi[an]us for the thirteenth time and Sil[v]anus), Christ was born on the sixth day of January after thirteen days of the winter solstice and of the increase of the light and day. This day [of the solstice] the Greeks, I mean the Idolaters, celebrate on the twenty-fifth day of December, a feast called Saturnalia among the Romans, Kronia among the Egyptians, and Kikellia among the Alexandrians.¹ For on the twenty-fifth day of December the division takes place which is the solstice, and the day begins to lengthen its light, receiving an increase, and there are thirteen days of it up to the sixth day of January, until the day of the birth of Christ (a thirtieth of an hour being added to each day), as the wise Ephraim among the Syrians bore witness by this inspired passage (*logos*) in his commentaries, where he says: 'The advent of our Lord Jesus Christ was thus

¹ Epiphanius presumably means that it was called Kronia by the Greeks, Saturnalia by the Romans, and Kikellia by the Egyptians, or, at any rate, by the Alexandrians,

appointed : [first] his birth according to the flesh, then his perfect incarnation among men, which is called Epiphany, at a distance of thirteen days from the increase of the light; for it needs must have been that this should be a figure of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and of His twelve disciples, who made up the number of the thirteen days of the increase of the light.'

"How many other things in the past and present support and bear witness to this proposition, I mean the birth of Christ! Indeed, the leaders of the idol-cults, filled with wiles to deceive the idol-worshippers who believe in them, in many places keep highest festival on this same night of Epiphany, so that they whose hopes are in error may not seek the truth. For instance, at Alexandria, in the Koreion¹ as it is called—an immense temple—that is to say, the Precinct of the Virgin; after they have kept all-night vigil with songs and music, chanting to their idol, when the vigil is over, at cock-crow, they descend with lights into an underground crypt, and carry up a wooden image lying naked on a litter, with the seal of a cross made in gold on its forehead, and on either hand two other similar seals, and on both knees two others, all five seals being similarly made in gold. And they carry round the image itself, circumambulating seven times the innermost temple, to the accompaniment of pipes, tabors and hymns, and with merry-making they carry it down again underground. And if they are asked the meaning of this

The Crucifixion and Resurrection Mystery Rite.

¹ That is the temple of Korē. This can hardly be the temple of Persephonē, as Dindorf (iii. 729) suggests, but is rather the temple of Isis, who in one of the treatises of the Trismegistic literature is called the World-Maiden.

mystery, they answer and say: 'To-day at this hour the Maiden (Korē), that is, the Virgin, gave birth to the æon.'

"In the city of Petra also—the metropolis of Arabia which is called Edom in the Scriptures—the same is done, and they sing the praises of the Virgin in the Arab tongue, calling her in Arabic Chaamou, that is, Maiden (Korē), and the Virgin, and him who is born from her Dusarēs, that is, Alone-begotten (*monogenēs*) of the Lord. This also takes place in the city of Elousa [? Eleusis]¹ on the same night just as at Petra and at Alexandria."

"Plagiarism
by Anticipation."

Here again Epiphanius, to prove a dogmatic point and display his learning, lets a most important fact escape him. We have read many speculative opinions on the symbolic rite of "crucifixion" and the "resurrection from the dead," but have never seen this striking passage of Epiphanius quoted in this connection. Here we have a definite statement that one of the most widespread mystic festivals of the ancients was connected with a rite of "resurrection," and that in Egypt the one who was "raised from the dead," and returned from the underworld or Hades, was sealed with five mystic crosses on forehead, hands and knees (? feet). This symbolic rite represented a macrocosmic mystery, Epiphanius tells us; but was there not also an analogous microcosmic mystery? And if so, must it not have been familiar to all those mystic schools and communities, Essene, Therapeut, Hermetic and Gnostic, which are so inextricably interwoven with nascent Chris-

¹ The only Elousa I can discover was a small place in Aquitaine.

tianity? Do we not meet with innumerable references to the mystic "again-rising from the dead" among the Gnostic circles; do we not also possess long quotations from one of their esoteric writings which finds the closest analogies with this central mystery of man regenerate in all the mystery-rites of antiquity? Do we not further possess the ritual of a very early Christian mystery-drama, or form of initiation, in which "the things done" closely resembled that of the passion—the crucifixion?¹

We need hardly direct the attention of the observant reader to the *aplomb* with which Epiphanius categorically asserts that the exact record of the birth of Jesus was to be found in the official Roman Fasti; this may be well paralleled by the like assertion of Justin that the trial of Jesus was to be found in the official Acts of Pilate. The wish was father to the thought, and there is an end of it. But may there not be some further reason for Epiphanius making so much of this Epiphany? Can it be that the similarity between it and his own Gentile name, Epiphanius, may have flattered the vanity of our pious but credulous heresiologue? Who knows?

Farewell to
Epiphanius.

Distracting, therefore, as the Bishop of Salamis is for the student of history, he occasionally lets fall a scrap of information which is of greater value than anything we can procure from other and more sober sources. And so in concluding our review of some of those "blunders" of his, we thank him for his over-zeal, and forgive him his total lack of historical honesty.

¹ See my "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten," "The Naaseni," pp. 198-206, and "The Acts of John," pp. 426-444.

Was Jesus in
Egypt prior
to 30 B.C.?

As we have frequently referred to the Apocryphal Gospels, or "Histories," as Epiphanius prefers to call them, it might be opportune to append in this place a curious passage from the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy. The form in which we now have this Gospel is of course very late, but it frequently works up ancient matter.

In the middle portion of this apocryphon, which professes to give a detailed story of what happened to the Holy Family during their three years' sojourn in Egypt, ch. xxv. reads as follows :

"Thence they went down to Memphis, and having seen Pharaoh, they staid three years in Egypt; and the Lord Jesus wrought very many miracles in Egypt, which are not found written either in the Gospel of the Infancy or in the Perfect Gospel."

Now the last of the Pharaohs was Cleopatra, whose tragic death occurred in B.C. 30. There is just the faintest possibility that this detail may have been taken from some ancient source; but on the face of it, it seems to be the story-telling of some imaginative monk, following out his normal association of ideas (Egypt-Pharaoh), the naïve adornment of a tale.

If, however, as some think, this Gospel came from Coptic circles, then the possibilities of our first hypothesis would be slightly increased, for dwellers in Egypt might be supposed to hand on local tradition, even while transforming it out of all recognition. But who can recognize with any certainty the flotsam and jetsam from the shipwreck of history that may have come into the hands of late legend-makers?

XX.—AFTERWORD.

WE have now reached the end of our enquiry, and look back upon our labours with mingled feelings of thankfulness that they are temporarily ended, and of regret that the nature of the subject throughout has been such that, even with the best will in the world, we cannot have avoided giving offence to many who will never trouble themselves to reflect that an excavator in religious antiquity cannot justly be held to be responsible for the nature of the objects he unearths from the *débris* of the buried past. But apart from this, it is somewhat a thankless task to find oneself compelled to add to the already enormous mass of difficulties which confront the student of Christian origins, rather than to help in diminishing them. For we can hardly hope that any but the few will be optimistic enough to have confidence that the very increasing of the difficulties is the surest way of hastening the day when some more potent means of removing them will be devised. A Retrospect.

As we said at the outset, most Christians, whether they be unlearned or learned, will not hesitate for one instant to answer the amazing question: Did Jesus live 100 B.C.? with an indignant No. We shall, there-

fore, have accomplished as much as we can reasonably hope for, if an impartial consideration of the evidence should persuade the reader that some cause has been shown why the asking of such a question should not as a matter of course be impatiently condemned on sight as the fantastic conceit of a disordered mind.

A Legitimate
Subject of
Criticism.

For, in the first place, we hope to have shown that the question is not of our own devising, but that, on the contrary, it arises as a legitimate subject of criticism out of an impartial enquiry into what appears to be one of the most persistent elements of Jewish tradition concerning Jesus. We do not come forward with some wild theory of our own maliciously to vex the souls of those who naturally hold loyally to the thing they have grown used to in Christian canonical tradition; we simply point to the existence, and what we consider we have shown to be the persistence, of an entirely contradictory tradition held tenaciously for many centuries by the fellow-countrymen of Jesus. We have not the temerity to presume to decide offhand between those ancient oppositions, but simply show that they exist, and venture to think that they require further investigation.

A Question
for Jewish
Scholarship.

The argument with regard to the persistency of the 100 B.C. date of Jesus is, of course, primarily addressed to Jewish scholars, and is put forward in the hope of drawing attention to Krauss' treatment of the subject, which cannot be held to be flattering to the pride of Israel in its traditions. Krauss has practically abandoned the field without a struggle; he categorically rejects the Jannai date, and tacitly accepts throughout his essay the entire validity of the Christian tradition of

the Pilate date, and in this he is supported, as far as I can discover, by the vast majority of modern Jewish scholars who treat of Christian beginnings.

As opposed to Krauss, who throughout his whole argument keeps the inconvenient factor of the Jannai date as much as possible out of the way, we have endeavoured to show that an analysis of Talmud passages and the Toldoth forms produces the impression that the 100 B.C. date element goes back to the floating mass of tradition from which both Talmud and Toldoth drew, and reveals this date as a persistent obsession which even the most glaring contradictions of both Talmud and Toldoth could never oust from its secure asylum in the national consciousness of Jewry.

Moreover, our enquiry into a number of problems connected with Christian origins seems to point to a field of investigation which appears likely to strengthen rather than weaken the possibility of a new consideration of Israel's reminiscences, from a point of view that should make Jewish scholars hesitate before they entirely abandon without a struggle what appears to be one of the fundamentals of their Jesus tradition, although they may in courtesy very well regret some of the thought-images in which part of this tradition has been clothed.

Nor can Jewish scholarship very wisely ignore the problem now that Krauss has brought it again prominently into the arena of apologetics, in the train of his motley assembly of sources for his "Life of Jesus" according to Jewish tradition. It is true that Krauss has placed the Jannai date well in the background as one of the most disreputable figures in the procession ;

Its Importance for Jewish Apologetics.

but it can hardly be expected that the majority of Jewish scholars will agree with Krauss without a further thoroughgoing enquiry, and be content to keep permanently in the background a factor of tradition which seems beyond all others to be the natural leader of the band. For there can be no doubt that if, from a thoroughgoing investigation of the subject, it could be shown that the Jannai date threw light on many obscure problems, the whole subject of Jewish apologetics would be enormously facilitated, and Jewish tradition would assume an importance for the study of Christian origins that would concentrate the attention of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century upon the Talmud and its allied literature.

If, on the contrary, Jewish scholars find themselves compelled to abandon their tradition in this respect, what hope can they have that the "treasure" which the Israelites have guarded with their lives for so many centuries, will in other respects be regarded by the thinking world as worthy of very serious attention? They may rather expect to be for ever confronted with the retort: *Ex uno disce omnes!*

The *Bona Fides* of the Talmud.

In the Talmud we have a collection of Jewish traditions compiled after the rise of Christianity, compiled during the very centuries when the new Faith was most strenuously fighting its way to the position of becoming the General Faith of the Western world; herein we have the record of the national life, of the hopes and fears of the people amongst whom especially Christianity came to birth; what greater test of the reliability and *bona fides* of the Talmud could there be, therefore, than the tradition which it contains concerning Jesus?

If, then, Jewish scholarship should find itself compelled to abandon so prominent a feature of this tradition as the Jannai date, and to accept the Christian canonical tradition in this respect, it is difficult to see how the Talmud can be considered anything but a blind guide on the subject which of all others in it most profoundly interests the Western world.

If, on the contrary, as some of my Jewish friends contend, the Life of Jesus, as set forth in elaborate detail by the later Evangelists, came as a complete surprise to the contemporary Rabbis, who possessed nothing but the most meagre traditions of their ancient colleague—vague reminiscences, such as that it all happened a long time ago, perhaps when Jannai was king, that there was some heresy or other started by a Jeschu who had learned wonder-doings and other things in Egypt, and who was put to death for misleading the people—then the Jews would seem to possess a largely extended ground of apology and justification for the rejection of what they already consider, even when they accept the Christian canonical date, to be for the most part a pseudo-historical setting of what was largely a dogmatic development.

A Line of
Defence.

It is true that even when accepting the Christian canonical date, the Jewish apologist can still argue that most of the Talmud Jesus stories may be accounted for as the "historicizing" or "legendarizing" of later doctrinal controversies, which may be set over against a similar "historicizing" of doctrinal formulas and dogmas in the Christian tradition; such, he might argue, was the common method of the religious mind of the time, and no one regarded it as a falsification of history; it

The Method
of Haggada.

was understood as a legitimate method by all haggada-compilers, religious controversialists and writers for edification; they wrote with strong religious emotion, and this emotion gave them consent; saving and living ideas, not the dead facts of an uncertain past, were their main interest. It is true that this method has long passed out of fashion, and that to-day it is the exact antipodes of the scientific precision of fact we demand in all such matters in the twentieth century; but it seems only just to remember that in endeavouring to appreciate the value of the evidence on either side, we have no right to condemn one side more than the other for its unhistorical forms, seeing that for the most part both used essentially similar methods for supporting their contentions, the actual facts of history being frequently set on one side or transformed the instant any doctrinal point became endangered by them.

The Jannai
Puzzle.

All this can be fairly argued with regard to many points which have arisen in our enquiry; but we must confess that the Jannai date is very difficult to explain in this way. There is a something peculiar about it which is somewhat fascinating.

If we are told that Jesus lived in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, we are not so astonished; for experience in contemporary apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic literature teaches us that Nebuchadnezzar is clearly a substitute for some other name. If even we are told that Akiba, one of the most famous of anti-Christian controversialists, at the beginning of the second century A.D. calls on Mary to witness to the illegitimacy of Jesus, we can understand that this is a pure device of haggadic polemical rhetoric, but when we are told that

Jeschu was the disciple of Joshua ben Perachiah and lived in the days of Jannai, and find this date element cropping up again and again in many guises in Jewish tradition, we fail to find a satisfactory explanation in either of the above canons of exegesis.

It all seems so senseless, so useless ; if it was untrue, what purpose could it possibly serve ? If it was the truth, why did not the Rabbis invariably put it in the forefront of all their polemics, and bend all their energies on making their tradition consistent, even as the Christians devoted all theirs to making their story uniform ? But this is just what we do not find ; there is not a single word on the Christian side to show that the Rabbis ever argued that the Christian tradition was one hundred years out ; no early writer, no Church Father (if we except Epiphanius, who only does so indirectly), breathes a word of such a terrific indictment of the fundamental historicity of the Christian tradition. Whatever we learn of the controversy from the Christian side, it all seems to show that the Rabbis spent all their energies on combatting dogmas—such as the virgin-birth, the divinity of Jesus, the Messiah claim, etc. It is true that Celsus categorically accuses the Christians of continually altering the Gospel history to suit dogmatic considerations ; but is it credible that the Rabbis could have had so potent a weapon in their hands as an ancient and authentic tradition that Jesus lived 100 B.C., and yet have refrained from using it on every occasion ?

Its Apparent
Senselessness.

It might, of course, be argued that this was not necessary in the first century ; the controversy then was simply with the Pauline view, in which there was a

The Seeming
Silence of the
Rabbis.

minimum of history and a maximum of opposition to Jewish legalism, and it was the latter which engaged the whole attention of the Rabbis. It might be said that the contest in that century was, so to say, a combat not of *haggadoth* but of *halachoth*; as far as popular Christianity was concerned, there were simply collections of sayings and such mystical forms of doctrine as those with which Paul was familiar and in which history played hardly any part. But even so, when later on the Jesus *haggadoth* began to take ever more and more definite shape and the present Gospel narratives came to birth, why, if the Rabbis had in their hands a reliable tradition of the existence of Jesus 100 years B.C., did they not employ it as their main weapon of controversy ?

All the evidence seems to point to the fact that they did not generally do so, and, therefore, we are inclined to conclude that they could not have had any general confidence in their tradition; and yet, on the other hand, it persisted among them, and did form an inconvenient weapon of attack, as Epiphanius indirectly witnesses. It is, of course, a common experience to find what appears to the modern mind to be the main point in a great popular controversy obscured, and every possible subordinate consideration taking precedence of it; this is common to the imbecility of human nature. But it is just possible that in this special instance the mind of antiquity, in considering that the energies at work were of more importance than the forms in which they were clothed, was nearer the truth than ourselves when we make history and external facts the more important things, and subordinate the consideration of

the forces behind the phenomena to a secondary position.

However this may be, it is a fact that ever haunts the consciousness of the historian and gives it no peace, that the most careful research cannot discover a scrap of external evidence in the first century that witnesses to the existence of Jesus, much less to the stupendously marvellous physical doings which the Gospel writers relate of him.

The Strength
of the
Christian
Tradition.

On the contrary, it is almost impossible to believe that these detailed and circumstantial narratives—even when shorn of every “miraculous” element to suit the preconceptions of extreme rationalists—could have been evolved entirely from the inner consciousness of Christian scribism; and, if there be any element in the whole narrative which bears on its face the stamp of genuineness, it is precisely the Pilate date. This, in my opinion, takes precedence far and away over all other date indications, and if it be not true, I cannot imagine any really satisfactory explanation for what otherwise must apparently have been inevitably shown to be a clumsy invention, for, as I have said before, the Rabbis could have instantly replied: There was no such trial under Pontius Pilate!

The Pilate story seems to have been in existence in written form not long after 70 A.D. This, of course, cannot be proved, for what can we *prove* concerning the Gospel narratives in the first century? But the whole phenomena of Gospel compilation seem to point to its existence somewhere about 75 A.D. If, then, this deduction holds good, we are compelled to think that, with barely forty years between the last year of Pilate’s

procuratorship and this date, the probabilities are largely on the side of its genuineness.

A Suggested
Genesis of
the "Common
Document."

On the other hand, I have heard it suggested by one who holds to 100 B.C. as the correct date, that the genesis of the Gospel story, which criticism is endeavouring to recover in the form of the "common document," is to be traced to the sketch of an ideal life which was intended for purposes of propaganda, and which could be further explained to those who were ready for more definite instructions in the true nature of the Christ mystery. To a certain extent it was based on some of the traditions of the actual historic doings of Jesus, but the historical details were often transformed by the light of the mystery-teaching, and much was added in changed form concerning the drama of the Christ mystery; allegories and parables and actual mystery-doings were woven into it, with what appears now to be a consummate art which has baffled for ages the intellect of the world, but which at the time was regarded by the writer as a modest effort at simplifying the spiritual truths of the inner life, by putting them forward in the form of what we should now call a "historical romance," but which in his day was one of the natural methods of haggada and apocalyptic.

The Pilate
Date from a
New Point
of View.

When it was further questioned: But why did the writer who put together this marvellous story place it at a date which you say was not the real date of Jesus? —the explanation suggested was somewhat as follows. The evangelical writer put the story at a date between himself and what we consider the actual historical date, most probably because he desired to avoid contro-

versy and criticism; he did not desire that the public, and especially those inimical to his own tradition, should be put on the track of the actual date, so that the memory of one who was regarded in the tradition of his school as the beloved Teacher, *par excellence*, should escape being bandied about in the arena of vulgar curiosity and violent theological controversy. Although his affection induced him to weave many sayings and perhaps some doings of the Master into his work, he especially did not wish to have it mistaken for the actual historical account of the life of the real Jeschu.

This was the main reason; but the Pilate date was also determined by the fact that there seems to have been some Jewish semi-prophet who created a little disturbance in a very small way, and who was in consequence brought before Pilate on a charge of sedition. The writer may have thus also taken some few facts from this incident and woven it into the main story; but he never had the slightest idea that anyone would take the story in any sense except that in which he intended it.

A further suggestion has also been made that the name Pontius Pilate came most readily to hand in this connection in those days of name-play, for it bore a close resemblance to a mystical term which played an important part in the mystery teaching. My colleague C. W. Leadbeater, in treating of the most ancient form of the creed-formula and the words "Suffered under Pontius Pilate,"¹ writes:

"Pontius
Pilate" a
Name-
Change.

"Instead of ΠΟΝΤΙΟΥ ΠΙΛΑΤΟΥ, the earliest

¹ Leadbeater (C. W.), "The Christian Creed, its Origin and Significance" (London; n.d. ? 1898),²p. 45.

Greek manuscripts which the clairvoyant investigators have yet been able to find all read ΠΟΝΤΟΥ-ΗΛΙΑΗΤΟΥ. Now the interchange of A and H is by no means unfrequent in various Greek dialects, so that the only real alteration here is the insertion of the I, which changes πόντος, meaning sea, into πόντιος, which is a Roman proper name."

The writer further says that later on ἐπὶ was substituted for ὑπό; and, with regard to πόντος πιλητός, states that the term meant a "compressed or densified sea," *i.e.*, the sea of "matter." This "suffering" of the Logos under the "thickened sea," however, does not refer to physical matter, but to an earlier stage in the descent of the Soul, for "the first step mentioned is the assumption of the vesture of matter—'the incarnation'; then the taking of human form, though still in the higher principles only; then the 'suffering under Pontius Pilate,' or descent into the astral sea; and only after that the crucifixion on the cross of *physical* matter, in which He is graphically described as 'dead and buried'" (p. 47).

Review
of this
Suggestion

All things, we are told, are possible to him that believeth, and we may add also to him that disbelieveth; but the question here is not so much one of possibility as of probability; that is to say, can a mind which endeavours to put on one side all preconception and prejudice for or against the means whereby the suggested explanation is stated to have been arrived at, and tries to judge of the matter solely on the ground of a hypothesis to explain the puzzling facts of objective research, entertain this suggestion as one that is not inherently improbable?

It is true that *πιλῆτος* in Greek is used by Aristotle in the opposite sense to elastic, with the general meaning of that which "may be pressed close without returning to its shape"; while *pilatus* in Latin also means close-pressed, thick, dense (*densus, pressus*)." It is further the fact that the early mystical communities have much to say of "water," "sea," "ocean," in the sense or as the symbol of subtle matter. It might, therefore, be held that these considerations give some colouring of probability to the suggestion. But, even so, it can only remain as a speculation, and cannot emerge into the domain of generally legitimized hypothesis, until objective research into the nomenclature and thought-atmosphere of the early mystic schools convinces us that the main secret of Christian dogmatics is almost entirely hidden in the mysteries of the inner experience. At present this latter view is repugnant to most minds engaged on the study of Christian origins, but that it is a very legitimate view I am myself becoming more and more convinced with every added year of study bestowed on the beginnings and earliest environment of Christianity.

And in this connection I would venture to say that the actual objective physical history of Jesus himself is one thing; the continued inner presence of the Master whose love and wisdom and power were in the new dispensation first made externally manifest through Jesus, is another matter. The former is mainly a question of pure objective history, though psychologically it becomes complicated with mysterious influences with which our present very limited knowledge of psychic science is not competent to deal, while the latter is a

The Making
of "History."

question of subjective activity, of vision and spiritual experiences, of an energising from within, a divine leaven working in the hearts and minds of disciples of every class of society and range of ability, the actual inner history of which no purely objective research can ever reveal.

From all of this there emerged in course of time a view of history and dogma that gradually shaped itself into ever more and more rigid uniformity; a sameness which we cannot discover in the days when the leaven was most actively working. In earlier times this later special view—let us call it Nicene Christianity—was at best one of a number; nay, in the earliest days it would have been probably unrecognizable as the view of any circle or group of immediate disciples of the Master.

The "Secret
Sermon on the
Mountain."

And in this connection it will be of interest to set forth the mystic tradition of the true nature of the "Son of God" and of the "Virgin Birth" as preserved to us in those very instructive documents generally known as Hermetic, but which may be more distinctly characterized as the Trismegistic literature. It is impossible here to set forth the reasons which have convinced me that the oldest deposit of this exceedingly instructive "Alexandrian" scripture must be referred to at least the first century A.D.; to do so would require a treatise as large as, if not larger than, the present essay, and I have hopes only to perfect my researches in the subject in the next twelve months or so, and then to present the reader with a new translation of the existing treatises and fragments and with an extensive review of the whole matter. Meantime let us turn our attention

to a most striking passage in the tractate entitled "The Secret Sermon on the Mountain," which further purports, according to its superscription, to be an instruction of "Hermes the Thrice-greatest to his Son Tat on the Mountain. A Secret Sermon on Rebirth and Concerning the Promise of Silence."

The phrase "on the mountain" in the title is to be remarked and compared with the phrase the "passing o'er the mountain" of § 1. This "mountain" seems to be symbolical of the grades of initiation in these inner schools; the external rites may also have been performed frequently on a mountain or hill on which the "monastery" in our modern sense (or, to speak more correctly, the collection of "monasteries" or chambers for meditation) may have been situated. The "passing over (*μετάβασις*) the mountain" was apparently a grade of instruction, or one of the lower grades prior to the sermon or instruction "*on* the mountain," the substance of which is given in our present treatise. Perhaps the phrase may be rendered the "passage *up* the mountain," and the term "*on* the mountain" may refer to the top of the mountain. In this connection I need hardly refer the student to the frequent occurrence of the term "mountain" in the Gnostic Bruce and Askew Codices (containing the two "Books of Ieou," etc., and the "Pistis Sophia"). In these later presentations of fundamentally the same teachings adapted to more popular beliefs, the mountain is called the "Mount of Galilee," and on it all the great initiations and rites are performed. The term occurs also in many other places, and frequently in the extra-canonical and apocryphal sayings.

The "Son of
God" and
"Virgin
Birth."

Our sermon is in the form of a dialogue between pupil and master, and the first two paragraphs run as follows:

"TAT. In thy discourse 'On Generation,' father, thou spak'st in riddles most unclear, conversing on divinity; and when thou saidst no man could e'er be saved before rebirth, thy meaning thou didst hide. Further, when I became thy 'suppliant,' upon the 'passing o'er the mount,' after thou hadst conversed with me, and when I longed to learn the lesson on rebirth (for this beyond all other things was just the thing I knew not), thou saidst that thou wouldst give it me—'when thou shalt have become a stranger to the world.' Wherefore I got me ready and made the thought in me a stranger to the world-illusion. And now do thou fill up the things that fall short in me with what thou saidst would give me the tradition of rebirth, setting it forth in speech or in the secret way.

"I know not, O Thrice-greatest one, from out what matter and what womb man comes to birth, or of what seed."

"HERMES. Wisdom conceived by Mind in Silence [such is the matter and the womb from out which Man is born], and the True Good the seed."

"TAT. What is the sower, father? For I am altogether at a loss."

"HERMES. It is the Will of God, my child."

"TAT. And of what kind is he that is begotten, father? For I have no share of that essence in one which doth transcend the senses. The one that is begot will be another God, God's son?"

"HERMES. All of all, out of all powers composed."

"TAT. Thou tellest me a riddle, father, and dost not speak as father unto son."

"HERMES. This race, my child, is never taught; but when He willeth it, its memory is restored by God."¹

Much more might be quoted in which the master endeavours to make the mystery clearer to the understanding of his pupil, but for the present purpose it is only necessary to add from § 4 the following pregnant sentences:

"TAT. Tell me this too. Who is the author of rebirth?"

"HERMES. The Son of God, the One Man, by God's will."

In the second paragraph of Tat's opening words the term "suppliant" is to be specially remarked and taken in close connection with the treatise of Philo "On the Contemplative Life," which, as Conybeare tells us,² most probably formed the fourth book of Philo's great work, or rather apology, "De Legatione." The alternative title of this work was "The Suppliants." By "suppliant" Philo tells us he means "one who has fled to God and taken refuge with Him."³

The "Suppliant," the "World," and the "Fullness."

The phrase, "when thou shalt have become a stranger to the *world*," is also to be remarked, and among other things may be compared with the new-found Saying: "Jesus saith, except ye fast to the world, ye shall in nowise find the kingdom of God,"⁴ The idea

¹ For text, see Parthey (G.), "Hermetis Trismegisti Poemander" (Berlin; 1854), pp. 114, 115.

² "Philo about the Contemplative Life" (Oxford; 1895).

³ "De Sac. Ab. et C.," i. 186, 33.

⁴ See "ΛΟΓΙΑ ΙΗΣΟΥ: Sayings of Our Lord," discovered and edited by Grenfell (B. P.) and Hunt (A. S.)—(London; 1897), p. 10.

is a common-place in the extant treatises and fragments of Gnostic literature, and is, of course, found frequently in the canonical documents of general Christianity.

Again in the phrase, "and now do thou fill up the things that fall short in me" (*τὰ ὑστερήματα ἀναπλήρωτον*), we have the familiar technical terms of the christianized Gnosis (*Plerōma* and *Hysterēma*, the Plenitude or Fullness and the Insufficiency or Emptiness), but not yet apparently systematized as in the Basilidean and Valentinian schools.¹

The "Mind." The treatise leaves on one side all questions of cosmogenesis and at once proceeds to deal with spiritual anthropogenesis or the spiritual birth of man. It will be remembered by students of these theosophical sermons that the birth of Man, the inner spiritual Son of God, is given as follows in "The Shepherd" treatise (§ 12): "But the All-Father, Mind, being Life and Light, brought forth a 'Man' co-equal with Himself." Man is the Son of the Great Mind of the universe, He is the Son of God. The christianizing Gnostic schools loved further to elaborate these ineffable processes, but "Hermes" is content to put forward a far more simple statement, and gives the whole answer to the neophyte's question in a brief sentence or two. It is true the pupil cannot as yet understand the words, nevertheless the whole process of rebirth or regeneration is given in the two opening answers of Hermes in § 2, and this process of rebirth is the same in man's small universe as the birth of the spiritual Man the Regenerator, cosmically the third member of the trinity God the Creator, God the Preserver, and God the Regenerator,

See especially Hippolytus, "Philosophumena," iv. 29 ff.

who are all One God looked at from different points of view. The Preserver apparently evolves the substance of the universe, the Creator seemingly fashions it according to the necessary laws, and the Regenerator is thought of as breaking through the spheres, freeing the spirit once more and restoring it to its primal source.

The whole secret of rebirth is Wisdom, which is conceived by Mind in contemplative Silence; the object of this contemplation is the True Good or God. The Will of God so to speak turns on itself and becomes the will of man to know God.

But the neophyte is represented as still without understanding of this great truth. He still desires to understand it in what we may call, in spite of the confusion of terms, his natural mind, the mind of the senses; he has not in him, he declares, any portion of that Mind which transcends this physical consciousness, or, perhaps, better, the "sensible world" in its proper philosophical meaning. To him Man must be something different from God. If God brings forth a Son, then there must be two Gods, and the unity is destroyed. To which doubt the master mysteriously replies: "All in all, out of all powers composed." So far from being different from God, Man is all in all, out of all powers, endowed with all powers—not, of course, the little man we *think* we are, but the Great Man we *really* are in our Selves, nay rather in our Self, which is One.

This truth, says Hermes, is not taught by ordinary means, not argued out and demonstrated by the senses, or by physical processes. It is a *memory* that God awakes in the soul. It must be *self-perceived*. "This race (*γένος*), my child, is never taught." What is the

The "Mind"
and the
"Man."

The
"Memory"
of the "Race"
of the Logos.

meaning of the strange term "race," which, as far as I am aware, all translators and commentators have previously missed? Let me again refer to Philo's treatise.

"But as for the *race* of devotees,"¹ he says, "who are taught ever more and more to see, let them strive for the intuition of That-which-is; let them transcend the sun which men perceive [and gaze upon the Light beyond], nor ever leave this rank² which leads to perfect blessedness. Now they who betake themselves to [the divine] service, [do so] not because of any custom, or *some one's advice or appeal*, but carried away by heavenly love."³

And again: "Now this race (*γένος*) of men is to be found in many parts of the inhabited world, both Grecian and non-Grecian world, sharing in the perfect Good."⁴

This "race," then, seems to be the race of the Logos, even as was the "race of Elxai," or those who have the higher mind active in them.

The Mind and
the Senses.

The manner of this rebirth, of this restoring of memory, is given in the opening paragraph of § 3, where Hermes describes one of the results of contemplation, in which the consciousness is, so to speak, transferred to the spiritual "vehicle"; but even here it is not *taught*, it is *seen*. This state of consciousness is not a mediumistic state of trance; the master has still full contact with the physical world, but the centre or focus of his consciousness is, so to speak, transferred to the higher spiritual part of his nature.

¹ Or the "therapeutic race."

³ P. 891; M. 473, 10.

² Order, space or plane.

⁴ P. 892; M. 474, 35.

Yet is the pupil still confused, for he still sees the physical body of his master before him. It is not the lower man, the master goes on to explain, who can bring about this inner change of consciousness, it is the higher Man who does so. Even the belief of the pupil that he actually sees the physical body of his master as a continuous thing is a sense-illusion, for every particle of it is in perpetual change. Accordingly, with § 6, Hermes lays down the great doctrine of the really True, the One Reality, as opposed to the perpetual change of manifested things. How can *This* be perceived with mortal eyes? he asks.

Hereupon Tat loses courage, and begins to think that the thing is too high for him, and that he has no higher mind. But Hermes warmly sets aside such an impious doubt, and proceeds to explain why the spiritual "senses" of his pupil are clouded and blinded by the brutish or irrational things of matter. The psychological problem is then stated in what seems to me to be a perfectly scientific fashion. The soul "substances" or "forces" have no direction in themselves; it is the will of man that can turn them upwards or downwards, so that they become manifest as virtues or vices. These virtues or vices are simply the tendencies of the distinct substantial things, or component parts or forces, of the soul, rational if ruled by the reason, irrational if out of its control.

Virtue and
Vice.

Indeed, it is the real "mind," the "man," that is the eternal idea of true humanity in us; it is, as it were, individual and yet not separate, sharing with all, sympathizing with all, yet showing forth in every manifestation some special aspect, one yet many, the

The Root of
Humanity.

true source of fellowship and communion, the mystery of all mysteries, man and humanity in one, the that "which prevents us if we are about to do a thing not rightly," if we will but follow its loving guidance, and finally the only way by which we can know God and recognize our eternal sonship.

The Christ.

But we have already gone far beyond what was necessary for our immediate purpose, namely, the showing forth of the mystic and truly philosophic view of the nature of the birth of "the Christ" in the hearts of men, which was held by pious and thinking minds in at least the first century of our era. In it we have in my opinion a setting forth of the mystery which can shock no man's intelligence, but which on the contrary was, I most firmly believe, the central truth insisted on by the great Master of Christendom Himself. Those who, in spite of the evidence which is coming to light on all hands from a thoroughgoing analysis of tradition, still hold desperately to the gross materialism of the popular dogma of the physical virgin birth, must do so at peril of destroying the whole comfort derivable from the Life of Jesus. For if, as it is claimed by theology, Jesus Christ was born miraculously without sin, what example can He possibly be for men born in sin? There can be no "imitation" on these premisses; for miracle alone can imitate miracle. The true Conqueror is he who wins his way through human nature, sinful human nature, towards the Divine; and unless I am grievously mistaken and read quite wrongly the records of the world's greatest Teachers, it is in this precisely that the triumph of a Christ consists.

In the Foreword of this essay I said that I would endeavour to show how even Jew and Christian could learn to understand and respect each other even on the ground of religion—I meant of course the Jew of to-day and the Christian of to-day. I believe that in the central fact above referred to, the basic truth not only of Christianity but also of Judaism and of every other great religion, all men may meet together in true fellowship and concord.

The Ground
of Reconcilia-
tion between
Jew and
Christian.

Doubtless I have put forward the matter in a very crude and imperfect fashion; I have probably used erroneous expressions and terms, have unwillingly hurt those whom I have not the faintest wish to distress, have misrepresented the position of others owing to my ignorance of what they really think and feel; but I have endeavoured to be just and accurate, and have been guided by a profound sympathy for humanity, a fellow-feeling with all, whatever creed they may profess; for the central fact of our general experience is that we are all in the same ignorance, struggling and battling for light. And I fear this ignorance will never be removed from our midst unless we co-operate together, and speak with utter frankness man to man, without fear of endangering our several vested interests, be they material, or psychic, or mental, or spiritual.

In conclusion, therefore, if it be not thought impertinent for so obscure an individual to do so, I would courteously ask the learned of the Jews for a thorough-going explanation of their traditions of Jesus with special reference to the date question and to pre-Christian mystic and heretical schools of every kind; and the learned of the Christians for a reconsideration

A Humble
Petition.

of the history of their origins by the light of such facts, for instance, as the patristically acknowledged striking similarity between the practices of the Therapeut Essene communities and the earliest Christian assemblies, the puzzling phenomena of the "Churches of God" which Paul found, using the "gifts of the Spirit" as some long-established practice, and the members of which he addresses in language which shows them as familiar with the most technical terms of the Gnosis, and the widespread pre-Christian rites of resurrection, and if not of crucifixion at any rate of stigmatization, as admitted by Epiphanius, and thereafter for a reinvestigation of the canonical date in connection therewith, and with the now well-known facts of the manner of making of haggadic, apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic literature, prior to and contemporary with the writing of our present canonical Gospels.

For my own part, I feel at present somewhat without an absolutely authoritative negative to the very strange question: "Did Jesus live 100 B.C.?"—and doubtless shall continue to feel so until all sides of the question have been again rigorously scrutinized by the ever finer critical equipment which the twentieth century must inevitably develop, and in the light of the great toleration which the ever-growing humanism of our day is extending to the most intractable questions of theology.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

P. 47. With regard to the chronology of the Christian era and the influence of the Cæsar cult on Christian dogmatics, a field of immense interest and importance has recently been opened up by the researches of Alexander Del Mar, in his painstaking study, "The Worship of Augustus Cæsar, derived from a Study of Coins, Monuments, Calendars, Æras and Astronomical and Astrological Cycles, the whole establishing a New Chronology and Survey of History and Religion" (New York ; 1900). In his Preface (pp. viii, ix), Del Mar writes :

"It will be shown upon ample evidences that after the submission of the Oriental provinces and consolidation of the empire, Augustus Cæsar set himself up for that Son of God whose advent, according to Indian chronology, synchronized with the reappearance of the Oriental Messiah ; the date being A.U. 691 (B.C. 63), the alleged year of Augustus' birth ; that this claim and assumption appears in the literature of his age, was engraved upon his monuments and stamped upon his coins ; that it was universally admitted and accepted throughout the Roman Empire as valid and legitimate, both according to Indian and Roman chronology, astrology, prophesy and tradition ; that his actual worship as such Son of God—Divus Filius—was enjoined and enforced by the laws of the empire, accepted by the priesthood and practised by the people ; and that both *de jure* and *de facto* it constituted the fundamental article of the Roman imperial and ecclesiastical constitution."

In an exceedingly interesting article, "The Time of the World," in "The Indian Review" of January 1903, Del Mar writes :

"I. If we accept the epoch of the zodions fixed by Godfrey Higgins . . . Alexander the Great altered such epoch to the extent of twenty-eight or thirty years, in order to bring the beginning

of Pisces to the year of his Apotheosis. Higgins' epoch of Pisces is B.C. 360. The Apotheosis of Alexander took place in the Libyan Temple of Jupiter Ammon, December 25th, B.C. 322. In that temple he found Aries regnant; he left it with Pisces triumphant. He was afterwards known as Ichthys, the Fish, the Great Isskander, etc., titles that are connected with the zodiac Pisces.

"II. Julius Cæsar altered the Olympiads from five to four years each, and their starting-point from a year equivalent to B.C. 884 to one equal to B.C. 776, an initial difference of 108 years. . . .

"III. Augustus Cæsar altered the epochs of the *Ludi Sæculares* to the extent of seventy-eight years. This changed the year of the Foundation of Rome from the equivalent of B.C. 816 to B.C. 738, and had a variable influence on other important dates.

"IV. Some time before the seventeenth century the Latin Sacred College restored fifteen years to the Roman calendar. All the years were inserted into that portion of the calendar which preceded the Christian era; it had the effect to remove the year of the foundation of Rome backward to B.C. 753, where it now stands. It also changed the *Anno Augusti*.

"To recapitulate, Alexander altered the zodiacs; Julius Cæsar, the Olympiads; Augustus, the *Ludi Sæculares* and year of Rome; Pope Gregory VI. or XIII. (?) the Augustan era; and Gregory XIII., the New Year Day and some other festivals, perhaps also the Year of the Nativity.

"The net result of these various alterations shows a present difference between Oriental and Western chronologies of sixty-three years; that is, when both are computed from any certain astronomical event. . . .

"Had the calendar, as arranged by Augustus, remained unaltered to the present day, his Apotheosis would have answered to our A.D. 0, or the year before A.D. 1; but owing to the fifteen years shifting already alluded to, his Apotheosis now bears the date of B.C. 15. . . .

"The introduction of the Christian era as a measure of time resulted in throwing all ancient dates into confusion. This was due to several circumstances. I. It was not an era, like the year of the world, or like Scaliger's astronomical era, which ante-dated all historical epochs, and ran on continuously from its own year to an endless succession of years. On the contrary, the Christian era is used both backward and forward; and as no allowance is made in it for a year between A.D. 1 and B.C. 1, it makes a difference of

one year as between itself and every era more ancient than itself. II. As it took its starting-point from the Roman era, more especially the *Æra Augusti*, it embraced all the chronological alterations which that era embraced. III. In correcting vitiated dates, the same number of years must be *deducted* from 'A.D.' dates which have to be *added* to 'B.C.' dates. This is a source of endless confusion. IV. As before stated, it was itself altered to the extent of fifteen years. Its use, therefore, involves three classes of errors, viz., the ancient alterations as between the Olympiads and the year of Rome; the single year between A.D. 1 and B.C. 1; and the fifteen-year alteration of the Middle Ages."

What exact bearing all this may have on our question I have not as yet been able to discover, but that Del Mar's researches must be taken into account in any thoroughgoing investigation of Christian chronology I am fully persuaded.

P. 154. A curious subject of speculation in connection with the Mamzer stories is opened up by the criticism of the artificial genealogy prefixed to the first Gospel (Matt. i. 1-17), "with the singular stress laid upon Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth, the converted sinners and heathens, as mothers of the elect one (compare Gen. R. ii.; Hor. 10b; Nazir 23b; Meg 14b)"—as Kohler puts it in his article, "Christianity in its Relation to Judaism," in the "Jewish Encyclopædia." Von Soden, in his article, "Genealogies of Jesus," in the "Encyclopædia Biblica" (in the just published fourth volume), referring to the only three women mentioned in the genealogies, says: "Rabbinic scholars also interested themselves in these women. On Tamar and Ruth compare Weber, 'Altsynag. Theol.,' 341. Rahab they transformed into an inn-keeper (Jos., 'Antt.,' v. i. 27), and traced to her eight prophets (Lightfoot, 'Hor. Heb.,' 180; Menschen, 'N. T. u. Talm.,' 40). She was an object of interest also to the early Christians, as 'Heb.' xi. 31 and 'James' ii. 25 show. Perhaps they interpreted 'harlot' allegorically as 'heathen.'" Compare this with "Deborah the landlady" and the "inn" of our Talmud stories. The curious student of human nature may also refer to the use made of these genealogical details by Guy de Maupassant in his short story, "Nos Anglais," in the collection entitled *Toine* (Paris; 1903).

P. 301. A Jewish friend has just communicated to me an oral form of Toldoth which differs in some particulars from any other form with which I am acquainted. My correspondent says that it comes from ancient Poland, and was included among the Jewish "old wives' tales," but he cannot trace its origin further. The

name of the betrothed is Jochanan and of the seducer Joseph, the name of the boy is Jeschu, as in other forms ; then follows the accusation of bastardy, and the robbing of the Shem, and the doing of wonders thereby. " But the spirit of the Rabbis was distressed, and fearing lest Israel should be enticed by the magical powers of Jeschu, R. Meir volunteered to profane his own powers and so bring about the fall of Jeschu." He accordingly does so in the way familiar to us in the other Toldoth forms. " When the women-reapers saw that the magician had fallen, they pelted him with cabbages until he died. But the Romans had already believed that Jeschu was a superhuman being, and when they heard of his death, they wished to exterminate all the Jews. R. Meir, in order to appease the anger of the Romans, and save his people from destruction, again made use of his extraordinary divine powers, and again mounted into the air, exclaiming : ' Lo ! I fly higher than Jeschu flew, as a sign that he hath sent me to institute your festivals.' And this he did with great wisdom, so that the Jewish festivals should always come first and be spent more happily. Thus he instituted Sunday the next day after the Sabbath," etc. R. Meir was the pupil of Akiba, and does not appear in any other form of Toldoth.

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be grateful for his sympathetic vindication of Apollonius from the too frequent charge that he was nothing better than a charlatan. He thinks that Apollonius must surely have visited some of the Christian societies, and have met with Paul, if not earlier, at least at Rome in 66. It seems to us very problematical that he should have taken any interest in the Christians, though the probability would be much enhanced if Mr Mead's view of primitive Christianity could be substantiated."—*The Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review*.

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